



THE
HISTORY
OF
Miss Beville.

V O L. I



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THE
HISTORY
OF
Miss Emilia Beville.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

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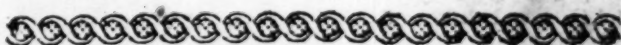
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THE
HISTORY
OF
Miss BEVILLE.



LETTER I.

Miss EMILIA BEVILLE, *to Miss*
HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



Few days more, my dear Harriot, and I shall bid a long adieu to this delightful mansion, in which I have passed so many sweetly serene and happy hours. I yesterday received an order from my father to leave my aunt, with whom, you know, I have lived almost

VOL. I.

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from

from my infancy, and who has ever shewn for me every mark of the most tender and endearing affection. To you I have ever been accustomed to reveal my most secret thoughts, and, it is most certain, that to you only I would impart my present painful emotions. Alas! my dear Harriot, dare I confess I feel none of that joy which certainly ought to fill my breast on the prospect of so soon joining my family, from whom I have so long been separated? You know not, my dear friend, and may you never know, the anguish that heart must feel, if endued with any share of sensibility, which is obliged, in spite of every effort, to disapprove the conduct of those, for whom heaven and nature meant to inspire us with only sentiments of respect, affection and esteem.

I am ignorant of his reasons for desiring me to attend him, but whatever they

they may be, my heart tells me I shall not be happy. I am perfectly convinced my days of tranquility and peace are at an end. I know you will condemn me for indulging these disagreeable ideas; these *presentiments* have ever met with your—perhaps—just ridicule. I expect a reproof, and am prepared to receive it with all humility; but still, my dear Harriot, I must repeat it, I am persuaded this change in my situation will be attended with more pain than pleasure. Reflect but a moment on the character of my family; you, Harriot, are no stranger to it. Ah! how different, how very different, is their way of life from that of my ever valued aunt! Need I describe either? Here, all our amusements are truly rational, and never fail to give us the most pleasing satisfaction: our view in the search of them is not merely that we may, in the most hurrying and dissipated

4 *The* HISTORY *of*

manner dispose of our time, but, on the contrary, how we may make the most of every fleeting hour. What a contrast to those scenes I am soon to be engaged in! Ah! why, my dear Harriot, am I not permitted to pass my life in this sweet retirement, where, free from the hurry and tumultuous pleasures of a vain and trifling world, I might have enjoyed life in some measure answerable to the design of that gracious being by whom we are placed here. But, alas! who can, on serious reflection, and a knowledge of the gay world, pronounce their plan of life to be such? And yet it is in that rank of unthinking mortals I am destined to appear.

You have already, I presume, had recourse to your salts, and are at some loss, no doubt, to guess what has occasioned in me these so very sober and sedate reflections; nor can you, perhaps, see any thing so exceedingly dreadful

in

in being taken from the shades of obscurity, to shine in a more exalted sphere. Why not be as rational in the parish of St. James, as a hundred miles from it? For this very good reason; that it is there no longer the mode to be so. And I freely own to you, that I fear my philosophy will not be proof against, not only example, but, in all human probability, precept: for will not my too gay mother think it her duty to give me a thousand instructions very different from those I have received from my amiable aunt? Yes, my dear friend, I am persuaded, from the knowledge I have of her sentiments, that I shall appear in her eyes absolutely ignorant of every polite accomplishment: for have I not, from my infancy, been buried in the country? and what other idea than ignorance and simplicity, can a person of taste and fashion form of such a being?

6 *The* HISTORY *of*

But shall I tell you what has given rise to those grave reflections at which you are so much surprized? — Know then, that I had just read, with infinite pleasure, some discourses published under the title of Sermons for young women. Nothing can be more elegant and persuasive than the language. Every line conveys the most pleasing instruction. As we ought never to read without being determined to profit as much as possible by our study, I had made a full resolution to copy in every thing, for the future, the amiable portrait (drawn by the author) of female excellence. I was charmed to find myself at liberty to follow his plan, and rejoiced that I was by providence placed in this delightful retreat where I might pursue my design without interruption, when behold, at that moment comes my father's letter, and at once destroys all my flattering hopes! Can you any longer

longer wonder at my unusual gravity? I am not qualified, Harriot, to shine at a quadrille table, I shall be looked upon as a poor, weak, inoffensive creature, who has been entirely ruined for want of seeing and conversing with people of taste: I am sensible this is the idea my new acquaintance will form of me; but be it so, I will endeavour to bear with fortitude that mortification, if you, my Harriot, continue to honour me with your esteem:

Adieu — Jenny is at this moment deeply engaged in packing up, and begs my advice in that important affair. You shall, if possible, have another line before I leave this agreeable place.

Yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE.

LET-

L E T T E R II.

To the SAME.

EVERY thing is settled for my journey. My aunt goes with me to B—, where I am to be met by my father and sister. All my time since I wrote to you has been employed in taking leave of my friends. A thousand agreeable schemes have been destroyed by this precipitate journey. Some of our rural swains pretend to feel violent pains and palpitations at the thoughts of losing me. Flattery, you see, has made shift to find its way even to these recesses of peace and tranquillity. I have no fears that my absence will be followed by any very dangerous consequences; though love certainly reigns with more power here than in that world I am going to visit. Since I have been able to preserve my
heart,

heart, in spite of all the sighs, vows, and eloquence used by the said swains, and that too in the midst of woods, groves, and purling streams, I think I need be under no apprehensions on its account for the future. This passion, I am told, is entirely banished from the gay world: people of fashion are no longer subject to that ridiculous weakness: the very name of love now conveys no other ideas to the imagination than country ignorance and simplicity.

If I am to judge by those epistles my sister has once in an age favoured me with, I should pronounce her at least as much ruined by seeing too much of the world, as she will be inclined to think me for having seen too little. How far we are likely to be agreeable to each other, I'll leave you to guess. What joy would it give me, could I flatter myself I should in her meet with another Harriot! but I am too sensible

this ardent desire of my heart will not be gratified. She dies for operas, plays, balls, and routs ; I for reading, conversing, and in short, my dear friend, I die (to use the fashionable phrase) with desire to be the very character I mentioned to you in my last. I intend to present her with a set of those discourses. Could I but efface the dreadful word—sermons, she might perhaps be prevailed on to peruse a few pages ; but that forbidding title is enough to deter her from any such design. The very idea will, I fear, give her the vapours. It is hard enough, she will perhaps say, to be obliged to hear them now and then in church, where one has the consolation of having something to amuse the eye during the tedious lecture ; but to go through such a task at home, when so many more agreeable and lively amusements present themselves, is a peice of self-denial scarce
to

to be expected. Have you seen them Harriot? if not, I advise you by all means to get them immediately. I am convinced, from the knowledge I have of your taste and judgment, you will greatly admire them, and with me declare, the ladies of the present age might, by following the precepts there laid down, make some very considerable improvements in their accomplishments both of mind and person.

Adieu, Harriot, my next will be from London, the present was merely to take my leave, and to assure you, whatever change of situation I may experience, my friendship for you must ever remain the same.

Yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE.

L E T T E R III.

To the SAME.

LEST you should believe it possible that the new scenes I am surrounded with should make me forget the promise I made of writing immediately on my arrival, I with great pleasure dedicate the ensuing hour to you. I will make no apology for not doing it before, as you will easily conceive it to have been out of my power for the first day or two.

Notwithstanding my apprehensions, the sight of my father and sister gave me great pleasure. They came, as I told you, to meet me at B—and received me with great tenderness and affection. Caroline assured me my mother was all impatience for my arrival, and would have been of their party, had she not been engaged with company at home,

home, which she could not with propriety leave. My father expressed his gratitude to my aunt in the most polite terms for the obligation she had conferred upon him, by the care she had taken of my education, and assured her, if he might judge from my appearance, he should pronounce that I had profited extremely by her good instructions and example. The praises he bestowed on me, and the multitude of civil things he was pleased to say to his sister, gave me infinite satisfaction; but how shall I express the painful emotions I felt when taking leave of that amiable friend?—Impossible! my dear Harriot, it is not to be described. Caroline was in some surprise on observing my tears.

Is it in nature, my dear, Emilia, said she, that the thoughts of seeing London and all its enchanting delights, should not banish in a moment any degree

gree of sorrow you might feel at parting with my aunt? Bless your stars, my dear, your days of banishment are at an end, and that you are now going to enjoy the life of a rational being, which, to say truth, you have as yet known but little of. How you have found it possible to pass your time, winter and summer in the country, day after day, in the same stupid dull manner, heaven knows, but, upon my word, I have pitied you a thousand times; for, between you and me, our good aunt has none of the most lively ideas, though I believe her a very good kind of woman, nevertheless.

In this manner she continued talking, while I had scarce spirits either to hear or answer one of the many questions she every moment asked.

The company had not left our house when we arrived: they were at cards. I begged I might not be introduced to
mamma

mamma in that assembly: she came to me in my apartment. She embraced me with great affection, examined me with much attention, and appeared perfectly satisfied with the observations she made. After sitting half an hour, and enquiring in an obliging manner for my aunt, she left me with Caroline, bidding us come to the drawing-room as soon as we had adjusted our dress. I would gladly have been excused for that evening, but was obliged to obey, as it was yet early, and they had not drank tea. A servant came to inform us it waited, and that his lady desired our company. The room was crowded. I was introduced in form, and received by the ladies with great politeness, nor with less gallantry by the gentlemen. You may believe I found no violent inclination immediately to commence gamester, I therefore endeavoured to find some amusement in sauntering from
one

16 *The* HISTORY of

one card-table to another, observing the countenances of those who played : whether I found any I'll leave you, Harriot, to guess, which you may the more easily do when I tell you, I wished most sincerely they would take their departure in peace and quietness. In due time they did so, and we were left at liberty to converse more freely on all that had past during our long separation.

I now begin to be tolerably reconciled to my new situation : nothing is wanting but liberty to spend my time as I please ; a want of some importance you'll grant, but this has hitherto been denied me. We have company at home, or are engaged abroad, every day, nor could Caroline, by her own confession, endure life on any other terms. As to mamma's conduct you must give me leave to be silent on that subject: I am her daughter, and as such ought to be
blind

blind to her faults or foibles, if she has any; to you, however, who are my other self, I will just observe that she is at present quite a Lady-Townly. Would to heaven my father knew as well as *her* lord did how to reclaim her! but he is too much of her own way of thinking ever to make the attempt. Yes, my dear friend, their ideas of happiness are too much alike ever to give him any concern. It is to you, Harriot, I write, to no one else in life would I presume to make these remarks. I know the goodness of your heart, and that you will believe it possible for me to see those errors without violating my duty. However great or numerous they may be, they never shall induce me to forget that respect so justly due to those who gave me being. They are my parents, and as such shall ever be honoured: their will, in every reasonable

sonable point, shall ever determine mine. I make no doubt, but in a few weeks they will suffer me to enjoy my time in any way most agreeable to myself. I have as yet made no such request, but have chearfully attended them in every party where my company was desired. Had I immediately expressed any reluctance, it might have given a disagreeable idea of my temper and disposition.

Caroline is gay and thoughtless to excess, to her I may speak with freedom: I shall certainly endeavour to inspire her with juster sentiments. I will spare no pains to give her a taste for more rational amusements, though I believe she is fully persuaded they have ever been her pursuit, and that I only am a stranger to them. She is really a fine graceful figure, and, tho' not absolutely handsome, agreeable. Her manner is perfectly easy and engaging.

Ah!

Ah! why was she not put under the care of my dear Mrs. Bellamy? How much happier in that case might it have been for us both! I might then have been blessed with an amiable friend, and she been taught in what manner to employ those hours agreeably which now so frequently hang heavy on her hands. She never opens a book, and work is her aversion. Judge then how she spends her time, when obliged by accident to be at home alone: she is truly worthy of pity. She is restless and uneasy, dying with impatience at its tedious length. She plays on the harpsichord, but cannot give attention enough to become mistress of it. This and the guitar, employ her by turns, though she seldom finishes a tune on either. I have not yet made her the present I mentioned: I have not forgot it, nor changed my design, but wait for a favourable opportunity.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Harriot, I will endeavour to obey you, I will be very particular, you shall know every thing that happens, whether worth or not worth your hearing, since you insist upon it. If my epistles prove stupid and unentertaining, blame yourself for ordering me to write, and that they will be so seems to me a point that will admit of no dispute; for, I beseech you, tell me what subjects am I now likely to meet with to employ my pen? No want of company I grant, but a most woful want of conversation, nevertheless. Ah, those vile cards! are they not, my dear Harriot, the ruin of all society? Till they are excluded from our parties, what have we to expect but stupidity? I protest to you the very mention or sight of a card-table makes me yawn. Play I never will, if I can possibly avoid it, since, were I to do so, I should no longer have right
to

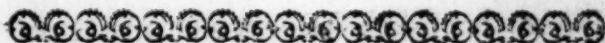
MISS BEVILLE. 21

to rail at those that do, and one would not, for a trifling consideration, give up so great a pleasure.

Adieu, believe me ever

Your affectionate

EMILIA BEVILLE.



LETTER IV.

To the SAME.

THANK fortune I have at last got a whole day that I can dispose of as I think proper. You see, Harriot, how I mean to employ it. Say, are you not much obliged to me for devoting it thus to writing to you? Or do you tell me I could not possibly have found an employment more agreeable to myself?

Mamma

Mamma and Caroline are engaged to dine with a large party at Sir John Seaton's, after which they go to the opera, but as I particularly dislike dining with a multitude of strangers, and have no violent *penchant* for the said opera, I was not sorry that I could with some degree of truth, plead a slight head-ach to excuse my going with them. My apology was received by mamma with great indulgence, but Caroline was shocked at my want of taste and spirit, said a thousand things to convince me that my loss would be infinite in not seeing the divine Scoti, as well as the no less divine creatures that were to be of the party. Upon my word, Emilia, said she, our old aunt has given you such a set of antiquated, dreary notions, that I half despair of ever conquering them. How can you, my dear girl, think of staying at home, and that too alone, when
you

you have it in your power to spend it in a manner so enchanting? A very proper expression that, Harriot, for seriously speaking, nothing, one would believe, but the force of enchantment could induce one to give up one's whole time to such unsatisfactory, and consequently tiresome amusements.—It must be even so. Heaven preserve you and me, my dear, from those fatal spells which can thus blind our understandings, and pervert our judgment!

I am much deceived if my gay sister has not got a lover, who, though highly favoured by her, dares not make proposals to my father. She has not, indeed, made me her confidant in this affair, but I have lately made some observations that leave me no room to doubt it. He is in the guards, of a good family, but has no fortune, excepting his commission, and his chief dependance an uncle, who, by the way,

24 *The HISTORY of*

is perfectly sensible of the value every prudent man ought to set on money, and, consequently, will not, in all human probability, approve his nephew's choice. I wish most sincerely I may be deceived, as I am certain she can have no prospect with him but that of misery, whatever ideas she may have formed. Think of an ensign in the guards for a husband, and him too as much given to folly and dissipation as herself! I protest I tremble for her when I reflect on the consequence of such an engagement. I have reason to believe, from what my aunt has often told me, and indeed from what I daily see, that my father's fortune is greatly impaired. Can it fail, my dear Harriot? Alas! who can answer for the event, where an inclination for gaming is so much encouraged? How many families of equal rank and superior income, have before now been by that means

means reduced to want and misery. He plays deep, I am sensible, nor can it be supposed he should always be fortunate; nay, I have but too great reason to fear the contrary. Mamma too is continually engaged in the same way: indeed, what she plays for is not, I hope, so considerable as to give me any just cause of uneasiness; I rather, on her account, lament the loss of time, health and spirits, which are all sacrificed without regret. Those domestick pleasures, which ought to be the joy of every wife and mother, are all given up for that vile, that dangerous diversion. In short, my dear Harriot, the more I see of this family, and the more I am acquainted with its conduct and government, the less reason I have to be satisfied.

What, still teizing me, you cry, with grave and melancholy reflections? But, my dear friend, tell me, have I not

too much reason to make them? Can I be otherwise than miserable, to see, as I do, my family living in a way so contrary to every principle of religion, and that duty they certainly as rational beings owe to their Creator? These are, indeed, my dear Harriot, very sober and serious reflections, and would perhaps come with more grace and propriety from an older preacher. You fancy, no doubt, that I am so amazingly charmed with the sermons I have so often mentioned, that I have now begun to write a volume myself, to compleat the reformation of mankind; but smile on my dear, it is the natural turn of my disposition to moralize when occasion offers, and to say truth, I have lately been at no loss for a text.

I have twice heard from my aunt. She writes in the most affectionate and agreeable manner, and expresses great surprize that I have not yet been informed

formed of my father's reasons for depriving her of my company. Says, she made no doubt but it was on a matrimonial account, which she never mentioned till now, fearing to give me uneasiness, as she was too well acquainted with my sentiments not to know, that a match projected while I was at so great a distance, could not be very agreeable to me, since in that case, it is evident, my inclination was not to be consulted. Thank heaven she is for once mistaken in her conjectures. I have nothing of that kind to fear. Any thing but this, and I will endeavour to obey as becomes a dutiful daughter: but should it be my lot to meet with a trial of that dreadful nature, should they dispose of my hand without consulting my heart, I know not what would be the consequence. This, my dear Harriot, is one of the modern fashions, which I find it will

28 *The* HISTORY *of*

be impossible I should ever be reconciled to. But let me not teize you with imaginary ills, it is sufficient you bear with my just complaints. Would to heaven those were removed! With what joy would I change my dreary my disconsolate stile for one more gay and lively!

You desire me to write, you command me to be minute, take then the consequence of my obedience without murmuring. Adieu, I must now write to Mrs. Bellamy, as I shall have no time for an age if I do not take the present. To-morrow we have half the town to dine here, and in the evening cards of course. No time, you see for scribbling—Adieu.

Yours

EMILIA BEVILLE.

LET-

LETTER V.

To the SAME.

IT is now scarce six o'clock in the morning—A strange hour for a London belle to be employed in writing—yet here I am, seated with full purpose to scribble a few lines to my Harriot: what they may be I don't very well know, but if they should prove of the soporifick kind and make you yawn, you will not greatly wonder when you reflect on the above mentioned hour.

What in the name of fortune, you ask, can have tempted me to rise at a time so extreamly vulgar and unfashionable? Is the dreaded lover at last proposed to me? or have I made choice of one according to my own heart? For this, you add, though a very different affair, might yet produce the same

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effect.—

effect.—Neither, Harriot, but I was so intolerably fatigued with the insipid bustle of yesterday, that I could not close my eyes during the whole night. I have known agreeable reflections prevent one's rest, and they were some consolation for the want of it; but to have it destroyed by mere fatigue and languor of spirits, is a circumstance not quite so pleasing. This is however my case at present, and not knowing very well what to do with myself, I have taken up my pen, the never failing resource on such occasions. This it is to live in town: had I now been in the country, what a delightful ramble might I have had in my dear aunt's park, or some other of those agreeable walks with which that place abounds? Here I may, with much more propriety, in my opinion, be said to be buried alive, than when an inhabitant of that charming place: yet this is the expression.

pression Caroline makes choice of, when speaking of any one who has that happiness.

Well, Harriot, what subject shall I chuse, with which to grace this early epistle? Shail I tell you who it was that made the violent bustle last night of which I so much complain, and also attempt to give you their different characters? By all means, you cry, if you think there were any worthy of that honour. Nay, my dear friend, if this is the condition you make, there's an end to my description at once, for, to say truth, there was not one of the company, either belle or beau, whose portrait, though ever so well drawn, could give you the smallest entertainment; and for their manner, conversation and so forth, there is no giving you any idea of either, at least I cannot do it by pen: every one was so lively, so witty, so immensely gay, there is no

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doing

doing them justice. Yet it is not what they say, but their manner of saying it, that gains them this envied character. Let a girl be born with a temper and disposition as grave as a judge, a misfortune that will sometimes happen, she must at all events, if she hopes to attract any degree of notice, lay aside that gravity which if indulged might perchance have ripened into solid sense, and have produced sentiments worth cultivating, and assume an air of levity and thoughtlessness in compliance with the present taste. To be the giddiest creature alive is now to be the wittiest; a circumstance that must be of infinite advantage to thousands. Not a company you enter but there are as many of them as you can possibly desire—and perhaps more. A thoughtful look is enough to ruin the reputation of the finest face. But enough of these remarks.

I have

I have this moment recollected a discovery I made the other day, which I mean to tell you.

Going the day I finished my last letter to look for a seal (having mislaid my own) in Caroline's room, she being, as I then told you, abroad with mamma, the first thing I saw, where I expected to find what I sought for, was an epistle directed for my sister unopened. I knew the hand immediately to be the lover's I mentioned; but that I might have no doubts about the author, I compared the writing with a card he had sent the very day before, to apologize for not dining with us as he had promised. This confirmed my suspicion. I was greatly shocked at their correspondence, as I saw evidently, by its being placed there, that it was a concealed one, and of course imprudent; but how much more so when

his want of fortune, as well as hers, was considered! Her maid, I make no doubt, is the confidante, but I will not attempt to corrupt her fidelity to her lady, as I intend to mention it to Caroline the first opportunity I can find. You shall know the result of our conference on the important subject when it is over: perhaps this very morning may give me the impatiently wished-for opportunity.

Adieu, my dear Harriot. Her maid is this moment gone into her room, I will follow, and if possible turn the conversation on that subject. Believe me ever

Yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE;

LET-

LETTER VI.

To the SAME.

YES, Harriot, it is indeed as I suspected. Our conference is ended, she has confessed to me the whole affair. I went into her room the moment I had finished my last epistle to you, as I told you I intended. I believe she had no expectation of seeing me so early, for she was sitting up in bed reading with visible pleasure the very billet-doux I had seen. She would have concealed it.

Nay, my dear Caroline, said I, no reserve, I beseech you, it looks suspicious. Finish your epistle, it must, I am persuaded, be an agreeable one, or you would not I think, at this time, have honoured it with your attention. Come let me be your confidante: believe me

36 *The HISTORY of*

I am perfectly qualified for that trust, and a love affair without one is but imperfect at best.

Why a love affair? cried she. You country-bred girls think of nothing else. Believe me, child, I have no idea of any such ridiculous passion.

O no, my dear sister, one would not suspect a lady of your gay disposition of so unpardonable a weakness; but what shall we say for Mr. Stanhope's want of philosophy, for I presume he confesses himself, in that pretty billet-doux, to be conquered by that passion you are pleased to ridicule? Come, confess, with a good grace, that you do not think it so very great a folly, so ridiculous a weakness.

Why Emilia, child, said she, with evident marks of surprize, which however she endeavoured to hide, you are witty this morning. I have often been told, that early rising is the finest thing
in

in the world to brighten ones ideas, and I am now convinced it is truth. But pray now tell me, how comes Mr. Stanhope to be chosen as the subject? how has he merited this distinction?

Why, really, my dear Caroline, answered I, by that very distinction he pays to you.

In this manner did we trifle for near an hour without coming to the point I wished. At last, however, she confessed I had some share of penetration. But what, said I, can you possibly hope for from his addresses? He has no fortune, and you, I am much afraid, cannot expect any thing very considerable. His uncle will never forgive him, should he be so imprudent as to marry without his approbation. All these things considered, for heaven's sake tell me Caroline, what is likely to be the consequence of such an engagement?

Ah,

Ah, spare me Emilia, cried she with emotion; I cannot follow you through all this grave, this sober reasoning.—What do I expect?—why what but pardon and reconciliation, according to custom, when we have done what cannot be undone? I could name you half a hundred girls who have tried the experiment with success. To ask the consent at present, of either his friends or mine, would be arming them against ourselves. But let us once take a trip to Scotland, and trust to fortune for the event. I am amazed you, who are so wonderfully pious, should not better remember the text which bids us be careful for nothing. I, Emilia, am determined, at least in this instance, to obey its very wise precepts. You see I am not quite so ignorant of the scriptures as you no doubt believed me: as a proof of it I can quote you another no less pertinent to our present subject.

subject. "Sufficient to the day is the
"evil thereof." Why then, my very
prudent sister, should I, by looking so
far forward, teize myself to death with
a thousand fears and apprehensions,
when it is so much my duty to trust
my affairs in the hands of Providence,
who never fails to order every thing
for the best?

Why really, said I, to do you justice,
you have made some very sagacious
quotations, and quite *a propos*, I must
confess; but do you, Caroline, look
upon the expedition you mean to take,
to be leaving your affairs in the hands
of providence? No, my dear, depend
upon it, if you had any such prudent
design, this journey to Scotland would
never once have entered your imagina-
tion. But I am persuaded you are not
serious at present, though I am going
to beg you will be so for a moment,
only till you promise me to give up all
thoughts

thoughts of that pretty excursion, or depend upon it I shall, as a proof of my sisterly care and affection, ask papa's opinion of your plan, which may perhaps in some measure disconcert it. I am absolutely serious, so chuse which you think most agreeable, either this instant promise me to renounce all thoughts of your intended tour, or suffer me to interceed with my father for his consent and approbation.

Ah Emilia, said my sister, would you ruin me? would you at once destroy all my hopes? How can you, my dear creature, mention so horrid a design? that would indeed effectually frustrate our purpose. But I tell you, when the indissoluble knot is once tied, they will forget and forgive. Besides, I have more than half promised, and would you have me break my word? that, I am sure, Emilia, is contrary to your own principles.

Not

Not in this, interrupted I; it will, on the contrary, be laudable, unless you can prove that to persist in a bad design is better than to change one's purpose. Think but for a moment on the consequence. Supposing, contrary to your hopes, a reconciliation should not follow your disobedience, you are, to say truth, a mighty proper person to figure as an ensign's lady. Reflect, my dear sister, on the splendid figure you are likely in that case to make, and you will, I am persuaded, be in no such violent haste. And that a reconciliation will not ensue, I can, without the art of divination, positively foresee.

How long we might have continued our conversation, had we met with no interruption, is uncertain; but mamma's bell put an end to it at that time. I had only as much time as to insist on her promise to think no more of her jaunt to Scotland.

Scotland. She gave it me on condition I would not mention one word of the affair to any of the family, but, like a faithful confidante, as I had declared myself to be, keep her secret, and in return, added she, I will, in due time, reveal one to you in which you have full as much concern as I have in this. I was going to intreat her to satisfy my curiosity immediately, when a servant came to inform us breakfast waited. What the secret can be, or whether she has really one or not, heaven knows, for I have never since had an opportunity to ask her, or to renew our conversation.

Need I bid you reflect upon her situation? It is almost the natural consequence of her fashionable education. She cannot think, she has never been accustomed to reflect. Ah, my dear Harriot, should she persist in her imprudent design, she may yet learn that
necessary

necessary duty, though it will then, I fear, be too late to profit by it. But she has given me her word that she will break off her rash engagement.

Adieu, I am sent for. I will not close this, as I may perhaps find out this important secret before to-morrow, and as such will transmit it to you.

Tuesday morning.

Ah, my dear Harriot, what a discovery! Good heavens! if what Caroline tells me should indeed be truth, your poor Emilia is ruined and undone. How shall I, agitated as I now am, give you any idea of my dreadful apprehensions?

Alas! my dear friend, my aunt's conjecture was but too just. I might, indeed, have guessed that something more than merely the desire of my company was in agitation, since our way of life is not calculated to enjoy the felicity that

44 *The HISTORY of*

that ought to arise from the pleasing society of family connections. No, my dear Harriot, the endearing ties of natural affection—ties so infinitely pleasing to those minds who know how to enjoy true and lasting satisfaction—are lost in the hurry and bustle of trifling dissipation. That I have some share of beauty seems to be the only perfection I am possessed of that gives my mother any degree of pleasure. Had nature denied me this, I am persuaded I should have been but lightly esteemed. This, Harriot, is a truth that cannot, you may believe, fail to give me great pain. Can there be a greater proof—but let me check my too forward pen, since it would only lead me to make reflections, which my duty bids me discourage. It is of my parents I speak, let me then do it with reverence and respect.

○ this

O this horrid secret! how shall I repeat to you what has just been told me? But you have my promise, let me then endeavour to fulfil it.

You remember Sir Joseph Beauchamp, who behaved with so much youthful gallantry to us at the last Northampton races; his age, certainly, made his behaviour extremely ridiculous, since no character can possibly be more so than a fop of seventy; but at that time it gave me neither pain nor pleasure, as I knew very little about him, though he was so intimate with the rest of my family. You, Harriot, can witness that he took no small pains to render himself agreeable to me, which I then imputed entirely to the natural gaiety of his youthful disposition, and must confess it served only to give me a convincing proof of his uncommon share of vanity, which could induce one of his age to believe it possible to become

come so. In spite of the multitude of compliments he then paid me, I should never have recollected my having been so honoured, had he not been recalled to my memory by what Caroline has disclosed. Would you believe it possible, that this old creature has absolutely made serious proposals to my father for your unfortunate friend? Judge whether he had any reason to fear a refusal, able as he is to make settlements above all their most ambitious hopes could have aspired to. His first lady brought him a fortune of forty thousand pounds, tho' heaven knows what could be her inducement, unless indeed she was of that mistaken opinion that a reformed rake makes the best husband: I can account for her choice in no other manner, and she, poor woman, was doubly deceived, since a few months proved, beyond dispute, that his reformation was not even begun.

gun. He was near fifty when, to the astonishment of his libertine companions, he was seized with the spirit of matrimony. This lady was not young, and had, as I told you, all this money in her own power, and in fine resigned it, her liberty and future happiness, into his hands. She lived but a few years, during which time, I doubt not, repentance was her chief amusement. This man, my dear Harriot, is now persuaded that Cupid has taken the trouble to waste an arrow upon him, and I, truly, am to suffer for his folly! Can any thing in life be more dreadful if really true? I tremble every time I am a moment alone with my father, lest he should talk to me on this horrid subject. Caroline tells me he is at present out of town, but is expected in a day or two, and imagines they wait for his return, that he may, by his presence, add weight to those arguments

48 *The HISTORY of*

arguments they mean to use in his favour. Now tell me, Emilia, cried my sister, when she had finished this dreadful history, should I not be very wise to keep my promise with Stanhope by way of prevention, for who knows but it may be my turn next to smite some old Grecian with a love-fit? and my father is too tender-hearted to let him sigh in vain, if he can pay as well for his cure as your swain can do. Now tell me, continued she, which do you in your conscience think the most eligible scheme—Love and Stanhope—or misery with some superannuated beau? Her question, I own, did not appear to me quite so easily answered as it would have done the morning I gave her my sage advise.—A day or two—ah, Harriot, think what a day or two may bring to pass! Adieu—when that time is expired you shall hear from
me

me again, at present I have not spirits to proceed on this odious subject, nor indeed on any other.

Yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE.



LETTER VII.

To the SAME.

YES, my dear Harriot, your poor Emilia is indeed doomed to misery and despair. The circumstances attending this cruel affair are such as leave me no room for expostulation. I see my duty, but, ah Harriot, however strange the assertion may appear, yet too certain it is that I shall, by following its dictates, be forever wretched. You will confess the justice of this declaration, when I have given you

VOL. I.

D

those

those reasons which induce me to make it. Ah, how many painful struggles will my heart endure, before I can prevail on it to comply with the dreadful commands it has just received!—But let me endeavour to obey—Heaven, in such a cause, will, I trust, enable me to make the desired sacrifice. It must be done, Harriot, though my death should be the consequence, and that it will, my foreboding heart, in most expressive language, tells me. But then, the peace and happiness of my family, I am told, depend on my consent. Ah, my dear friend! can I believe this and hesitate a moment?—Hear the particulars.

I was yesterday ordered to attend my father in his dressing-room. My mother was there. My fears were inexpressibly painful, sensible as I was what would be the subject of their conversation.

Sit

Sit down Emilia, said my mother, your father has an affair to communicate to you, which we hope will meet with your ready approbation. It must, if you are not blind to your own interest. It has already met with that of all those who are solicitous to promote your happiness and felicity.

Why those tears? said my father; do not, Emilia, give me reason to doubt the goodness of that disposition which has ever appeared to me perfectly sweet and amiable: do not, at this time, when it is going to be put to the proof (for I am sensible what I am going to propose, may in some respects, be disagreeable to one of your age) forfeit my good opinion, but hear me with that attention and obedient temper as becomes a dutiful child, and which I, as a parent, have a right to exact.—I could not speak, he saw my emotion, nor waited for my reply.—Whatever

appearance I may make in life, continued he, and however great the world may believe my fortune, it is now necessary, my dear Emilia, to inform you that the one is but very little consistent with the other. My conduct has not perhaps been that of the most prudent father. I am sensible of my error, but that conviction comes too late, unless you my daughter will, by consenting to my desires, help me to extricate myself out of the difficulties into which my—let me confess—irregularities have plunged me. Fortune now offers the means. You, Emilia, are chosen as the instrument. If I am not deceived in the judgment I have formed of your heart, you will not suffer the ruin of your family, when, by a trifling sacrifice, you can prevent it, and again restore it to peace and tranquillity. You have had the good fortune to captivate the heart of Sir Joseph Beauchamp,

champ, he has made the most generous proposals, and desired my permission to pay his addresses to you. Need I remind you of his immense wealth, or the innumerable advantages that must result from being the wife of a man of his rank and fortune? A moment's reflection will discover them to any unprejudiced person, and you, I flatter myself, are entirely so. Your heart has no pre-engagement, it is free. Let me then, as your friend, advise you to consider what is so greatly for your interest. But should this not have sufficient weight to prevail, I must next speak in the language of a father, and command your obedience. I hope, however, there will be no necessity for this unwished-for severity, a severity which, though perfectly justifiable, both from custom and that authority nature has certainly invested in every father, I would never make use of, did not my

54 *The* HISTORY *of*

present perplexed affairs render it but too necessary.

Ah! my dear sir, cried I, pierced to the heart with his obliging tenderness, and the cruel reflection of his distress; for well I knew his affairs must indeed be dreadfully disordered, before his pride—for to you, Harriot, I may confess no man has more—would suffer him to acknowledge, as he has done, the unhappy conduct that had occasioned his trouble. My heart bled, I say, at that cruel moment, and if my immediate death would have restored him to peace, I would have resigned my life without a murmur. Ah! my dear friend, who can withstand the eloquence of a father who submits to plead in the language of a friend with his child, and that too to implore her assistance to save him from ruin?

Ah, sir, said I, do not afflict me with the recital of your distress, you have
indeed

indeed a right to command my obedience, but, cruel as the sacrifice is which you require, and on which you assure me your future peace and felicity depend, I will endeavour—though heaven only knows the pains my heart must suffer—yes sir, I will endeavour to obey.—You tell me my obedience alone can retrieve your affairs—it is enough—let me be miserable—may you, sir, and my dear mamma never know a moment's pain. But let me at least have this consolation; do me the justice to believe, my dear sir, that no interest of mine, none of those advantages you were pleased to mention, would have had any influence on my heart. Alas! every day's experience gives me new proofs that they cannot ensure felicity or content. My utmost ambition has ever been to pass my days in peaceful retirement. The world and its so eagerly coveted dignities,

have never been able to inspire me with a desire to possess them: I have no taste, no inclination for the hurrying, and, let me say, unsatisfactory pleasures, with which you would tempt me. No, my dear sir, that education which has taught me the duty of obedience, has also taught me to know, that true felicity does not consist in being either rich or great; that they are vain and empty distinctions, nor can, to a thinking mind, give any real satisfaction: but how much less when purchased at the price of our future happiness! Do not then, I beseech you, wrong me so far as to believe that any consideration, but that of your felicity, should have induced me to listen for a moment to a proposal so dreadful, for such you must permit me to assure you it appears to me. I will not presume to mention his character; you, sir, are perfectly acquainted with it. Alas! is it possible that a woman
of

of any delicacy can be otherwise than miserable with a man of Sir Joseph's principles? But it is your pleasure — the reasons you condescend to give touch my heart too nearly to suffer me to reflect, I will endeavour, therefore, to banish thought till I have obeyed your commands. My tears would not suffer me to proceed: what, indeed, was left me to add?

I am not deceived then, said my father, you are, my dear Emilia, the amiable girl I ever believed you. Be assured the sacrifice you make to your duty shall be ever properly valued. My mother embraced me with great tenderness.

Ah! thought I, what a situation must their affairs indeed be in that it can make this amazing change in their manner of treating me! Can you, Harriot, conceive what were my emotions, or the thousand different ideas which at that moment filled my imagination?

nation? Impossible. My father then gave me a particular account of the motives that induced him to press me so earnestly on this odious subject, and amongst a thousand others this was one.

Sir Joseph had been bound with him for a considerable sum of money, which he had some time ago been obliged to borrow to discharge some debts of honour, as they are falsely called, which he had contracted during a long run of ill-luck, and which he then meant to pay by mortgaging part of his estate; but delaying from time to time taking an account of his affairs, conscious the review would afford him but little satisfaction, and fortune still continuing perverse, he lost double that sum, nor is it now in his power to pay either one or the other, without the utter ruin of both himself and family. Sir Joseph, sensible of this, continued my father, has generously promised, on condition

condition I will prevail on you to make him happy, to supply all my present wants, as well as to redeem that part of my fortune which has long been in the possession of others. This, my dear Emilia, is the true state of my affairs, nor have I enjoyed an hours peace for many months, conscious that my circumstances were so dreadfully disordered. Ah! why did I not endeavour, by changing my conduct, to retrieve them before they were so far gone?

Enough, my dear sir, interrupted I; let me, by my obedience, give you a proof how much more I value your peace than I do my own. Indulge me, I beseech you in a reasonable time, that I may endeavour to prevail on my heart to obey you with less reluctance. O save me, my dear mamma, save me as long as possible from the wretched state that awaits me! whether to sacri-

sice my happiness or yours, I am sensible ought not to cost me a moment's deliberation; yet, ah! do not let me be hurried into misery and despair!

You shall not, my dear child, you shall have every indulgence you can desire. But why will you terrify yourself with groundless fears and apprehensions? Why persuade yourself that you are to be unhappy? Is it possible you should really fear it, possessed as you will be of every blessing in the power of riches and honours to bestow? His age is the only reasonable objection you can offer, and this, surely, must appear trifling, when set in competition with those other desirable advantages. Believe me, my dear, there are a thousand girls of fortune as well as family, who would rejoice with great sincerity at a prospect so inviting. You, Emilia, have never yet experienced the least tryal of poverty: you
can

can form no idea of its horrid consequences. Believe me, who have been for some months past in continual apprehensions at its approach, nothing in this life can be so dreadful. Those ridiculous ideas of peaceful retirement, which you have imbibed during your residence in the country, are fit only for those who are doomed to spend their days in obscurity. Riches, my Emilia, be assured, will never fail to ensure every other desirable gratification. Take my word, I should never have known a moment's uneasiness but for the want of that best of all blessings.

Ah, my dear Harriot, what sentiments are here? But time may, perhaps, teach her to think more justly: heaven grant it may! Next week this dreadful man is to be introduced to me as a lover—need I bid you pity me? Alas! if providence does not, by
some

some unforeseen means, deliver me—yet, how vain is that delightful hope?—My word is past—my tears blind me—let me indulge them, they may perhaps relieve my heart from that load of woe that now oppresses it. Adieu, till I am more composed.—Ah! Harriot, shall I ever again know a moment's peace?

While every face around me wears the appearance of joy and gladness, I, my dear friend, am dead to every sense of pleasure. I dare not suffer my thoughts to wander on the odious subject that inspires their happiness. Ah, why is human nature so very weak? Why does it cost us so many pains merely to do our duty? Alas! Harriot, in spite of my unfeigned affection for my family, and the sorrow I feel at the bare idea of their being even a moment in distress, not even the consolation of doing what my reason tells me

me is right, can save me from those dreadful conflicts that tear my heart. The more I reflect, the more shocking does the precipice appear, on whose horrid brink I at this moment stand. Is it not hard, my dear Harriot, extremely hard, to be obliged thus to give up every flattering prospect in life, every pleasing hope we form of happiness? Yes, my dear friend, let me confess, it appears to me extremely so. Ah, how little did I know, when I first saw this hated man, that in him I beheld the person who was to cause me so much misery! How happy is it for us, my dear Harriot, that we cannot look into futurity! How very few are there who, in that case, would not see so many approaching misfortunes as must effectually prevent their enjoying the blessings of the present hour! Some share of trouble is, I believe, the portion of every mortal, and I acquiesce in the
just

just decree. Were it not so, we should be too apt, I am persuaded, to forget that we are in this life only in a state of probation. We do not, even now, sufficiently accustom ourselves to profit by that consideration: let me, however, embrace the present occasion. By tryals only can our virtue and fortitude be known. You, my dear Harriot, must confess mine are abundantly severe. I dare not think of them, lest I should be tempted to do what in another I am sensible I should condemn. My father's, my mother's felicity!—Ah, what a consideration! Yes, I will rejoice that I am chosen as the means to restore their lost peace; surely this ought to compensate for any pains I may endure. How often have I sighed for greater power to relieve the distresses of my fellow creatures! Have I not, a thousand times, with justice declared, the greatest blessing heaven could bestow

was

was a benevolent heart, with a fortune sufficient to gratify its utmost desire of being generous to all around us?

Write to me, my dear friend, use all your persuasive eloquence to inspire me with courage to bear my fate with becoming fortitude: Adieu. Pity and continue to love your extreamly unhappy and afflicted,

EMILIA BEVILLE.



L E T T E R VIII.

To the SAME.

ALAS! my dear Harriot, I shall not live to obey my father's cruel commands! My spirits have quite deserted me in spite of all my endeavours, and heaven is my witness I have used every effort in my power to prevent their

their depression, determined to give my family as little pain as possible from seeing the conflict I endure. Since I have been persecuted with his addressee in person, I am infinitely more shocked than when only in expectation of that misfortune. His ridiculous passion, which he would persuade me, as he has done himself, is unalterable, is disgusting to the last degree. That I may, if possible, forget the unlucky circumstance of his being old, he is perpetually describing to me the amazing exploits he performed in his youthful days. He would make me, were I inclined to listen to him, the confident of those intrigues he was engaged in a thousand years ago. Poor, mistaken mortal, to fancy that any woman of delicacy would esteem him the more, were he still what he so ardently wishes! Alas! the gallant achievements of which he so feelingly boasts, did

did he but know his true interest, ought for ever to be buried in oblivion. Not a woman, he says, in those days of felicity, could resist the united force of his person and address. Then, with the most odious fondness taking my hand, he cries—Nor do I yet, my lovely Emilia, despair of inspiring that divine passion, since you have given me permission to plead that which, at this delightful moment, glows in my transported breast.—But spare me, Harriot, the mortifying repetition—I blush for the folly of the man, when I consider that very man is to be my—Ah! can I ever pronounce that horrid word? I tremble at the tormenting thought. Alas! poor Lady Beauchamp, what a fate was yours! how sincerely do I feel for the misery you must have suffered during those few years you was the companion of this odious man. Yet yours was voluntary misery—heaven knows what could be

68 *The* HISTORY of

be your temptation—but let me banish reflection. Ah, Harriot, had I been one of those happy insensibles we so often meet with, what innumerable pains might I have escaped! Yet I should not then have known the joy of adding to the peace and felicity of my parents—this is a consolation of infinite importance. You, my friend, have drawn it in the most pleasing and flattering colours: your eloquence, believe me, is not lost. I have a thousand times perused your inimitable letter, nor ever failed to find my resolution strengthened by your amiably-given advice. Continue to sooth me with your delicate praise, for, indeed my dear Harriot, I need every help to confirm me in the design I have formed, tho' no more perhaps than my duty absolutely requires.

You bid me write of Caroline: what can I say of that affair? She gave me
her

her word she would think no more of the wild scheme she had projected, but I am much afraid her lover's eloquence will have more influence than all my prudent advice. I talk to her continually, she still promises to take my counsel, but, what I do not much approve, is, she is as much as ever persuaded a few months would reconcile Mr. Stanhope to his nephew's marriage. She is fond of indulging this hope, which, for my own part, I believe to be entirely without foundation; for, however fond he may now be of him, to offend in a point so material, cannot easily be forgiven. He is here frequently, nor has any one, but myself, the least suspicion of his design; indeed, at present, every one's attention is engaged on another affair—Ah, Harriot, what an affair is that which gives them all so much pleasure! By this means they are at no loss for opportunities to
concert

70 *The HISTORY of*

concert their measures, but still I hope, nay, am persuaded, she will not take so rash a step after the conversation we have so frequently had on the subject.

I am told Sir Joseph's brother, whose son has ever been looked upon as heir to his uncle's fortune, is in dreadful apprehensions about this odious marriage. Ah, Harriot, why can they not prevail on him to change his ridiculous purpose! They have ever since Lady Beauchamp's death, pleased themselves with the prospect of their son's good fortune, little dreaming that they might be disappointed by such a piece of folly. The young gentleman is now on his travels. How extremely ungenerous, after encouraging in him those flattering hopes, to destroy them at once by this frightful union. Alas, Harriot, did they but know, as you do, the sentiments of my heart, ought they not rather to pity than condemn me as they do,

do, for sacrificing, as they justly express it, my peace and happiness for the sake of enjoying his rank and fortune? This is the false light in which they see my conduct: and what, indeed, can even the unprejudiced think in such a case? No wonder they should put the least favourable construction, interested as they are in his affairs. Mrs. Beauchamp is a woman of great ambition and violent spirit: she talks in high terms of Sir Joseph's folly, as she justly terms it, nor does my family escape her censure, though the world, in general, will no doubt commend their prudence; for this, my dear Harriot, is an amazingly prudent age: though I cannot but observe they have, to make room for that virtue, discarded some others no less valuable, and a thousand times more pleasing. Mr. Beauchamp is indeed a man of great good sense; but can this prevent his
feeling

feeling the disappointment that is preparing for him? No, Harriot, it certainly cannot: yet he speaks with moderation, owns his brother has an undoubted right to dispose of his fortune as he thinks proper, but adds, a man at his time of life might have given greater proofs of wisdom than in marrying a child. Ah, my good Mr. Beauchamp, how perfectly do your sentiments resemble those of the unhappy creature who now gives you so much uneasiness!

You will perhaps wonder how I came by all this intelligence, since I am not intimately acquainted with their family: indeed if I had, they would not perhaps have expressed their sentiments so plainly in my hearing. My Jenny's sister is woman to that very enraged lady, and it was by her means I came by this information. I do not encourage her in talking to me of affairs in which I
have

have no concern, nor, to do her justice, have I ever discovered in her an inclination to be guilty of this too common failing; but as I am sensible she has a most sincere affection for me, I could not refuse to listen to what she seemed so deeply interested in. I am persuaded she was in hopes—or at least unfeignedly wished it—to prevail on me to change my purpose, convinced as she is, that I am consenting to voluntary misery. She cannot be reconciled to my lover, notwithstanding his liberality to her, for the most trifling services — no small proof this of her worth. I doubt not, her sister is ordered to transmit to her the sentiments of her lady, in hopes I may by that means hear them, and consequently not have ignorance to plead, in regard to the injury I am going to do her family. Ah, Harriot, with what joy would I prefer a cottage with sweet content,

to all this envied wealth! Thank heaven they do not yet press me to fix a day for compleating my wretchedness—in this mamma keeps her promise—but, alas! I am dying every hour with the dreadful apprehensions, for it will come, my dear friend; convinced as I am of this, can I but be miserable? How differently is she affected with this mortifying truth! Never was woman so happy. I will not enquire into her motives—they would, I fear but add to my sorrow. It cannot be that she believes my happiness so near, she knows my sentiments too well to be thus deceived.

Adieu, my dear friend, I must not indulge myself in any reflections, I must endeavour to banish thought for ever.

EMILIA BEVILLE.

LET

LETTER IX.

To the SAME.

DO not too severely chide me, my dear Harriot, for my unusually long silence, but ever do me the justice to believe, when I am thus apparently guilty of neglect, that my fault is unavoidable. Alas! my dear, in spite of the affliction I am in, I yet am obliged to give some degree of attention to the horrid preparations making for my approaching—Ah! Harriot, I have been fatigued to death with the disagreeable assiduities of my cruel tormentor! He is continually making me the most valuable presents, in hopes no doubt, of reconciling me to my fate by those baubles so generally valued by our sex. Alas, he knows but little of that heart he so vainly tries to gain!

I am now persuaded Caroline has entirely given up her design, and this belief has relieved my heart from a great deal of trouble. Her misery, had she followed the dictates of her heart, would have been, I am well assured, absolutely unavoidable. Alas, Harriot, it is enough that one of two daughters is born to wretchedness!

You will not forgive me if I do not inform you of every thing that passes, or I should hardly take the trouble to tell you I have, in spite of that dejection so visible on my countenance, made a small impression on the heart of a beau I saw for the first time the other night at the opera. A few months since, this conquest might have given me some degree of pleasure, but now—ah, let me not think.

The attention he paid me was observed by all our party. Sir Joseph was one, nor did he seem much delighted

lighted with the compliment my lord paid to his taste and judgment, by the approving looks he cast on me. He left the box he was first in, and, being acquainted with some of the gentlemen in ours, came and placed himself near me, and, to do him justice, lost not one moment of the time we stayed. What he said, though expressed in the most elegant and pathetick strain, made but very little impression on my heart, though it made a great deal on that of Sir Joseph. In spite of all my caution to avoid his civilities, he led me to our carriage; as I approached it he sighed, and, with perfectly well-bred gallantry, pressed my hand, uttering some soft nonsense, of which I could only guess the subject by those graces that accompanied it. Caroline advises me by all means to give him that preference he so justly deserves, and without ceremony leave

my antient lover to seek out some other help-mate more suitable to his age; but, gay and gallant as he is, he is not the man, Harriot, whose perfection could induce me to violate that duty I owe my family, nor break the promise I have given. No, my dear friend, every hope is fled: I have only to subdue my rebel heart. Yet, is it in nature that I shall ever prevail on it to obey without reluctance? Ah, no.

Mrs. Beauchamp being now convinced that the affair is resolved on, and to be soon concluded, is quite outrageous: says the most bitter things in all companies, not only of her brother-in-law, but of all my family. He is not ignorant of the liberties she so imprudently takes, and swears she shall feel the weight of his resentment, since she has, by her proceedings, so clearly discovered her mean and sordid disposition.

A letter

A letter is brought me.—It is from you, my Harriot—let me peruse the dear contents, and that done I will again resume my pen.

Yes, my dear friend, it is possible I find, notwithstanding my despair, to taste a most sincere joy. How unspeakably happy has your obliging, your amiable epistle made me! My sorrows are, at this delightful moment, almost forgot. Are you positive nothing will prevent you?—Ah, Harriot, should I be disappointed after this sweet hope you have raised in my breast, I shall expire with grief. You know not, my dear friend, nor can I describe to you, the transport of my heart, when I read the unexpected news. Your presence shall support my drooping spirits. Come then, my charming Harriot, come, and by your amiable, your agreeable vivacity, give me that consolation I stand so much in need of. But I forget

80 *The* HISTORY of

to give you joy on the happy event that has procured me this highly valued favour: yet need I tell you how sensibly I share in whatever gives you pleasure? I know this addition of fortune will only be agreeable to my friend as it will enable her to extend more universally that benevolence for which so many, even now, bless their amiable benefactress.—What joy in life can equal that power?

But adieu, I will not a moment longer delay to assure you how sincerely I rejoice in your good fortune, nor how very tedious every hour will appear till I am permitted to congratulate my Harriot on her safe arrival in town. Be expeditious then, I beseech you, as you value the friendship or peace of

Your

EMILIA BEVILLE.

L E T.

LETTER X.

To the SAME.

GOOD heavens, my dear Harriot, to what a scene of tumult and confusion have I been witness! Ah, my poor, imprudent sister, how truly do I sympathize in those sorrows that I with too much reason fear will be the consequence of the ill-advised step you have so rashly taken! Need I, after this, tell you she is gone? A letter she left for me with Jenny informed me of this unfortunate affair. My father declares she shall never again enter his door, nor does my mother endeavour to mitigate this cruel sentence. I have been severely questioned, but, alas, Harriot, was I not deceived? For some weeks past I had been fully persuaded she had entirely laid aside any such design: how easy is it to

impole on those who are not accustomed to practise deceit! Ah, my friend, I suffer every way by her imprudence; I not only feel for her as a sister, but am now more than ever persecuted about this horrid man. All my prayers and intreaties for delaying the so justly dreaded day, are no longer attended to; my father insists upon my immediate consent, and cruelly says, he doubts not I only desire to gain time that I may find an opportunity to follow the undutiful example of my sister. Is it kind, Harriot, thus to upbraid me, at a time when I am on the point of giving him so undeniable a proof of my affection and care for his interest? Yet, let me remember the too just cause he has to be displeased: it is not easy to govern our words when under the influence of passion. I ought not then to condemn his apprehensions.

O hasten,

O hasten, I beseech you, my dear friend, be speedy in your journey. I cannot support the thoughts of not having your presence on this dreadful occasion, after having pleased myself with that delightful hope. — I cannot, it is impossible I ever should, name the horrid day so peremptorily insisted on. Come then I intreat you; and save me from this unspeakable mortification. You, Harriot, shall determine for me—yet, do not, ah, for heaven's sake, do not be too precipitate in that important determination.

I send you a copy of Caroline's letter.—Adieu, believe me

Ever yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE.

“ I know, Emilia, you will condemn
“ the step I have taken, but believe
“ me, my dear girl, the only pain I
E 6 “ feel

84 *The HISTORY of*

“ feel on the occasion is the reflection
 “ of my having deceived your unsus-
 “ pecting heart. Trust me, I had well
 “ weighed the consequence likely to
 “ follow, though you, I fancy, will be
 “ apt to think my talents but ill suited
 “ to that employment: you are, how-
 “ ever, for this once in your life mis-
 “ taken. The question to be considered
 “ was merely this: whether I was to
 “ give up my charming Stanhope to
 “ despair, and thereby reduce myself to
 “ a condition not one grain better—to
 “ wait patiently till my prudent father
 “ could find me out a spouse, equal in
 “ age and wisdom, to the venerable
 “ soul he has chosen for you; or, by
 “ following the spirited example of fifty
 “ I could name, not only secure my
 “ own happiness, but, also save that
 “ honest man, whoever he might be,
 “ the mortification of having — a very
 “ wife—

“ wife—for a very wife, in that case,
“ my dear Emilia, you may depend
“ upon it I would have been This,
“ you will grant, could not require any
“ very deep thought or reflection; no,
“ my dear, it really did not cost me a
“ moment’s deliberation. In short,
“ what is done cannot be undone. My
“ word, as I told you, was given be-
“ fore your sage advice, which, to do
“ you justice, had some share of wis-
“ dom in it, but I am not much given
“ to follow those so very grave lessons
“ you endeavoured to teach me. You
“ forget you had been bred up in the
“ shades of obscurity, and — let me
“ add, my dear girl—simplicity: while
“ I had been educated in the world
“ of liberty and ease. Quite a different
“ thing, believe me.

“ To your gravity I commit the
“ care of informing papa of my ex-
“ pedition; for this task, I own, I
“ thought

“ thought you better qualified than
“ even myself: no small opinion of
“ your capacity in some things, you
“ see. Indeed, to do you justice, I
“ find no fault in you but want of
“ life and spirit; a terrible defect, let
“ me tell you, in those who mean to
“ shine or make any figure in life.
“ Why, my dear Emilia, had I a face
“ and person like yours (you may be
“ thankful to my being so near the
“ brink of matrimony for the con-
“ fession of this truth) I would have
“ made such a bustle, such destruction
“ amongst the beaux, and raised so
“ much delightful envy in the female
“ world, as should have surprised you;
“ but having not quite so great a share
“ of dame nature’s favours, I am there-
“ fore obliged to be content with less
“ ambitious views—not but I have in
“ my time had a little flirtation.—
“ Had her ladyship, I say, been more
“ judicious,

“judicious in conferring her obligations, I would have acted very differently from you : Yes, child, your ridiculous old knight should have expired for want of a wife, rather than I would have consented to become his mortified rib. I have told you a thousand times at least, that my antiquated aunt had quite spoiled you, and you are now going to prove beyond dispute, that what I said was truth.

“Adieu, my dear, make the most favourable report you can to the house, when you enter upon this affair. You have, to say truth, a most persuasive method of pleading. To your eloquence then I commit my cause, do not, I beseech, you, be sparing of it, but use all your airs and graces on the important occasion. Soften the story as much as you can, in due time I will, accompanied
“by

88 *The HISTORY of*

“ by my swain, come, and, heroine
 “ like, throw myself at my father’s
 “ feet, when, embracing his venera-
 “ ble knees, I will, in faltering accents,
 “ sue for pardon and reconciliation,
 “ and the duce is in it if a scene so
 “ moving does not do the business.
 “ I never, in all the course of my
 “ reading, met with an instance where
 “ a submission of that kind was re-
 “ jected—no such thing. As for my
 “ new uncle, leave him to my manage-
 “ ment, I’ll answer for my success with
 “ his worship.

“ Farewell—in spite of your wisdom,
 “ gravity and all that, I believe you are
 “ an excellently good girl, and as such,
 “ believe me, I love you as a sister
 “ ought. Once more, I beseech you,
 “ muster up all your stock of eloquence,
 “ nor forget to put on one of those
 “ soft, insinuating looks with which you
 “ gained the heart of your superannuat-
 “ ed

“ed lover—no bad scheme to interest
“him in my favour; you have only
“to command his approbation; as
“your professed slave and servant he
“dares not refuse it. Again I bid
“you adieu.

“CAROLINE (almost) STANHOPE.”



L E T T E R X I.

Miss HARRIOT MOLESWORTH, to
Miss CHARLOTTE MOLESWORTH.

GOOD heavens! my dear Charlotte, how different is the subject I am now to write upon from that you no doubt impatiently expect me to entertain you with! I cannot express my astonishment, nor do I believe I ever shall be enough composed to inform.

form you as I wish what has occasioned all these exclamations. Mamma, who ever tenderly loved the dear girl — for need I tell you it is of our lovely Emilia I write? — is distressed beyond measure on her account. The most astonishing affair that ever sure was known! I am not able to give you the particulars, though I die with impatience to inform you of what has happened. What shall I say to you, Charlotte, how will you believe it, when I tell you my lovely, my accomplished friend, your dear Emilia, is gone? nor can any one give the smallest guess either where, with whom, or on what account. Sir Joseph, indeed, is supposed by most people to be the cause of her flight; but I, who know her to be incapable of even the appearance of deceit, cannot persuade myself that she would have suffered her family to flatter themselves so long with
the

the hopes, nay promises, of her consent, unless she had fully determined to keep her word. I am convinced—yes, Charlotte, I would answer for her sincerity at the hazard of my life—I say, I am beyond all doubt convinced, she never gave them one promise she did not religiously purpose to fulfil. Where then is she? you ask. Why then is she not here to perform her engagement? I cannot—with grief I confess—I cannot answer these important questions. Heaven only knows that mystery we in vain attempt to unravel; for, in spite of every means (and you may believe none have been omitted, either by her enraged and really much to be pitied father, let his faults be what they will, or her doating, despairing lover) not the least information can be obtained. No language can describe the excess of his affliction: jealousy, excited by the violence

92 *The HISTORY of*

lence of his passion, grief and resentment torment him by turns, nor will he ever more, I absolutely believe, know a moment's peace. That he adored her, is no more than every one must, who, like him, had such frequent opportunities of seeing and becoming acquainted with her unspeakably, amiable conduct and disposition. She is, my dear sister—yes, let me say she still is, for never will I believe she will give me reason to change my favourable opinion—but who can express her invaluable worth?—Well may you lament your irreparable loss, Sir Joseph, for believe that friend who knows every sentiment of her heart, she has not left in this world her equal. The more I reflect on her numberless excellencies, the more am I perplexed and lost in amazement. All my thoughts are darkness and confusion.

Can

Can you, Charlotte, form to yourself any idea of my astonishment when flying to Sir William's, the instant I arrived in town, I was informed by her half-distracted and bitterly inveighing mother, of her disgraceful flight, as she chose to call it? But judge from those emotions you will yourself experience, on reading this imperfect account, what mine must have been, when every circumstance was heightened by the most outrageous indignation. It is certain every thing at this time concurs to aggravate the misfortune. From my heart do I pity them, tho' sensible self-interest has but too great share in their care and solicitude. This is a truth known full well, but it is impossible they should not also grieve for the loss of a daughter so amiable, so dutiful in every action of her life. Every thing at this time, I say, concurs to render their grief more violent.

Caroline

Caroline just gone, their own affairs in such confusion, all their pleasing hopes in a moment blasted by this fatal—what shall I call it? You must not expect me to say one word of our own affairs, I can think nor speak of nothing but my unhappy friend.

Some people suspect Lord B—as the author of her flight:—I find he has publicly declared the most violent passion for her. She mentioned him, indeed, in one of her letters, but spoke of him so slightly, and with such apparent indifference, that I looked on what had passed between them merely as a piece of gallantry, with which every man would be induced to treat a figure beautiful as hers; but this was not the case, he found means, they tell me, to be introduced at Sir William's, had been two or three times at my Lady's rout, and behaved in a manner so very particular to Emilia,

that

that every one pronounced him rival to Sir Joseph. I should, no doubt, have heard more of this in her next letter.—Ah, Charlotte! shall I ever receive another from that amiable girl?

This, I was telling you, is the conjecture of most people. Every one, you may believe, will form some or other on so extraordinary an occasion. But how comes it then, if they are right, that he is still in town, and to all appearance more deeply affected with her loss than either her family or lover?—It is true, this is no infallible proof of his innocence, since he may in fact, notwithstanding all this, be the very person who has been the cause of all our sorrow. What more likely method to prevent suspicion than this surprise, grief, and apparent despair? and that he would endeavour to conceal his guilt is, I think, a point that will admit of no dispute. By
what

what I can learn of his character, there is no man in the world more likely to engage in such an enterprize. But why then will the vile censorious town presume to say her flight is voluntary, and that she went off with his lordship in order to prevent her union with a man she justly disapproved? It is true, they accuse her only of having consented to a clandestine marriage, they durst not believe her capable of any greater imprudence, her character was too well known for that. Thus while every one talks as fancy suggests, none can give any certain account of what we so ardently wish to be informed of. My lord declares his innocence in terms so expressive, that, I own, I cannot doubt his sincerity; but he at the same time swears, had he known or suspected any one had formed such a design, he would, rather than have lost a creature so angelick, have given
the

the world just reason to accuse him—such a thought, he says, never appeared necessary to him, as he had—he modestly confesses—the vanity to hope he might at least have gained the approbation of her family, if not that of their charming daughter, and he fancies his venerable rival had as yet gained no greater favour. He, good man, appeared to him it seems but as a trifling obstacle, though his lordship might have found himself deceived. The terms Sir Joseph offered were, perhaps, more tempting than any he either could, or would propose, however violent his love; and that it is violent, he gives abundant cause to believe.

I have not yet told you those few particulars that are known of her flight, nor when the dreadful misfortune happened; but no wonder, I write without order or connection, since I am

VOL. I.

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not,

not, nor indeed do I believe I ever shall be, recovered from my astonishment.

She had for some days before been indisposed.—Ah, Charlotte, is it possible she should not, considering the conflict she must have endured between her duty and inclination? All her prospects of happiness on the point of being for ever blasted, by the horrid sacrifice she was going to make! For that she meant to give them that proof of her affection, nothing shall ever induce me to doubt. She was ordered either to ride, or, if able, to walk every morning by way of exercise; of the latter she was ever particularly fond, and accordingly had, for several days, gone for an hour or two into Hyde-Park. On that day, which I shall never think of without horror, she had gone accompanied by her maid and a man servant, to take an airing in
that

that fatal place. They had but just entered Grosvenor's-gate, when Emilia, finding it rather cool, sent the man back for a thicker capuchin, ordering him to follow her immediately. It was, you know, but a step back from thence to Hanover-square. He obeyed her orders as fast as possible, but returning to the Park, he sought every part of it in vain, his lady was nowhere to be found. He then imagined she had changed her design and gone home, but, good heavens! imagine the consternation of every one, when, after waiting in the utmost anxiety and uneasiness, night came on and neither Emilia nor her maid appeared! The man, you may suppose, was questioned over and over, but all to no purpose: what I have told you is all he knew of the affair, nor have they, with all their diligence, been hitherto able to learn a more satisfactory account.

Adieu, my dear Charlotte, I can write on no other subject, and all I can say on this will but add to my affliction. Mamma would have sent you a line or two, but is prevented by Lady Beville, who has just sent to beg the favour of her company. There was no refusing her request at a time like this. But two daughters, and those both so unfortunate! It is a lucky circumstance for her that she is not burthened with any violent share of natural affection.

Farewell, let me hear from you every post. I now rejoice that you did not accompany us.

Yours,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.

LET-

LETTER XII.

To the SAME.

YES, my dear Charlotte, I was sensible you would be deeply afflicted at the unfortunate affair I related to you in my last, and am glad to find your sentiments on the occasion concur so exactly with mine. Though still (and, alas! I greatly fear there are no hopes of ever being otherwise) ignorant of her fate, I am as much as ever persuaded she is innocent in every respect. I cannot prove my assertion—would to heaven I could!—but am nevertheless convinced it is just. But time, I trust, will do her this justice though I cannot.

Her friends, with the utmost diligence, still continue their search, but cannot gain the smallest information, or the most distant hope. You see,

my dear, I have nothing to write that can alleviate your friendly care ; for my own part I am more miserable than you can possibly conceive.

Sir Joseph has absolutely been for this week confined to his bed by a fever, and but yesterday, for the first time, was able to leave his room. He one moment declares he never will give up the hopes of recovering her, and the next raves, and shews the most dreadful jealousy lest she should have deceived him, and really be gone off with some more fortunate—because more favoured—lover. My Lord is still, in spite of every appearance, suspected by them all, but certainly without cause ; since, it is well known, he has not been one day out of town since her absence—Yet she may be in this very town ; as what place more likely to conceal her ? If so, why should he leave it ? In short, I am weary of conjectures :

conjectures: my fruitless reflections, which I yet make every moment, serve only to torment me. I am really ill, having not enjoyed a moment's tranquillity since my arrival. My friends may with justice be highly offended at the little pleasure or satisfaction I express for their unremitted civilities; but they know not, as you do, the value of our lovely Emilia: they can have no idea of the misery I continually suffer on her account.

Caroline is, I am told, returned. How extremely unfortunate is it for her affairs, that this more dreadful event than her own, should have happened just at this time! She can have no hopes of obtaining that pardon she flattered herself with, while the minds of all her family are thus distracted with grief and disappointment. What influence she may have on the heart of her new uncle I do not know, but, if

the character I hear of him is just, he would have dispensed with any other perfection sooner than that of fortune. A woful presage this for the gay and thoughtless bride! Mamma would have me call upon her, but really her presence can serve no other purpose than to renew my grief; for I am not able to give her any consolation, either as to my Emilia or herself. Indeed she may not, at present, think she stands in any need of my endeavours, and however she may be deceived, as long as the delusion lasts, the case is pretty much the same as if she really did not. To believe ourselves happy is, in fact, to be so. Let me not then be the first to inform her she is mistaken: a very few months, I doubt not, will fully prove that disagreeable truth. Think, Charlotte, what a couple! She nineteen, he scarce twenty; he an ensign, with very little or no fortune but his commission,

commission, she a fine town-bred lady, with less, or perhaps none. What a prospect! a most promising pair to educate and bring up a family, upon my word. The mother will want a governess as much at least as any child she can possibly have.

Every thing is settled in regard to our legacy. Mr. Osmond has been particularly obliging in that affair. It is exactly as we supposed; never was a better man. Miss Osmond is on the point of matrimony with young Cathcart; they insist upon my being one of her bride-maids, Miss Bellamy is chosen for the other. Alas! how little am I able by my presence, to add either life or spirit to the happy society! They do every thing in their power to dispel my melancholy, but, in spite of their obliging endeavours, the thoughts of our amiable friend must ever prevent their success. I use all my efforts

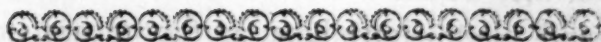
indeed to appear chearful in their company, lest I should by my gravity give a damp to the general harmony; nor could I possibly refuse to perform the part they require at the ensuing ceremony. They talk of balls, and a thousand other gaieties on the happy occasion, but all will be dull and insipid to me, unless I before that time gain some intelligence concerning my friend.

Adieu, Charlotte, you see I have nothing to say worth your reading; tho' to say truth, I believe the stupidity of my letter is rather owing to my want of spirit, since I am certainly surrounded by a thousand agreeable scenes, and as many agreeable friends, which could not fail to afford me abundance of materials to fill a much larger portion of paper, were I in a disposition either to enjoy or describe them: but indeed, Charlotte, this is not at present the case. However, as mamma is at this moment
writing

writing to you also, I hope her epistle will make amends for the insipidity of mine. Once more adieu, continue punctual in writing as you value the good graces of,

Your,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



L E T T E R XIII.

To the SAME.

STILL in the most painful suspense! Every one now begins to despair of ever being delivered from it. Is it not astonishing that all their diligence should be so ineffectual? Not the smallest information, in spite of all their care, can be obtained.

I have not yet been to wait on Mrs. Stanhope, but intend to go in a day or

two. I hear she is as gay and happy as if every thing was settled agreeable to her most sanguine wishes. Her sister's affair gives her no sort of concern. She says she has too good an opinion of her to fear for a moment her having done any thing that can possibly deserve censure, and takes it for granted that she will, in due time and place, introduce, as she means to do, a smart son-in-law to the family. Ows, she never believed her possessed of so much spirit, but is glad to find herself deceived; and ends by saying, the days of Chivalry are long since at an end, this age does not abound with those valiant knights, who, in days of old, would think nothing of stealing a mistress in spite of giants or enchanted castles. No, no, cries she, the poor girls are now obliged to meet their swains at least half way, or be content to spend their days in the melancholy amusement

amusement of lamenting the decay of pure and disinterested love. Giddy as she is, there is some truth in what she says. But who, in the name of fortune then, is this smart son? Ah, could she but convince me that I have no reason to be thus alarmed—but 'tis impossible. It is astonishing to me that she is not more concerned, was it only in consideration for what her father loses by the breaking off this match; nay, is not her own interest deeply concerned in the event? This is a powerful argument with most people, but she looks only to the present hour. "Be careful for nothing," is her favourite text, as Emilia once told me, and she gives daily proofs, it must be confessed, that it is so.

Let me at present endeavour to forget this tormenting subject, as I must, if possible, lay aside my melancholy air, at least for this day. I am going, as I
told

told you I had promised, to attend the nuptials of Miss Osmond, and would not willingly appear on such an occasion with a pensive countenance. My letter will therefore, you may easily suppose, be a short one, as I have not yet begun the important business of dress. Indeed if I did not, though in this town, still continue my convenient custom of early rising, I must for once have disappointed you of your no doubt expected epistle. By the way, this excessive punctuality may be attended with some disagreeable effects. For instance; I might now have found it impossible to write, hurried as I am: you, of course suppose a thousand frightful accidents must have happened, to prevent what I so faithfully promised; the consequence of which is, you do not enjoy a moment's peace, till the return of another post day convinces you those fears and apprehensions were entertained

entertained without foundation. You see, my dear, the best institutions have their inconveniencies and defects. However, I will not, if I can possibly help it, disappoint you even once, while I remain in town. In our agreement we made no conditions concerning the wit, sense or vivacity, that was to embellish our correspondence; it will, therefore, not be quite so difficult, as it would in that case have been, to oblige you.

I do not think the following copy of a letter a bad one for those who, like us, write merely with a design to hear of each others health and happiness, and not by way of displaying their eloquence or genius in the epistolary art. Take it, in case you should ever be at a loss either for time, or, what is frequently more embarrassing, a subject. "I am well if you are well—pay the post and all is well." Pray now tell me, what can any one desire more?

I have,

I have, in honour of the bride, made up a most elegant white tiffue, and the most beautiful suit of blond you ever saw—but I must bid you adieu, the man waits to dress my hair, and that is a work of time, as well as pain. Pride, it is said, feels none. If so, you will tell me I need be under no apprehensions.

Ever yours,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



LETTER XIV.

To the SAME.

SHALL I never again be able to write to you in my usual manner? Alas! my dear, if it depends on the recovery of our Emilia all hopes of that nature are too surely gone for ever! Still lost, Charlotte, to the ardent wishes

wishes of her numerous friends and admirers, what can I say to your anxious enquiries? Nothing, my dear girl, that can give you any degree of satisfaction: why then should I add to your uneasiness, by dwelling on a subject I have already exhausted? That I must ever think of her is most certain, nor would I give up that privilege tho' my reflections yield me only pain. Let it rest then till Providence unravels the perplexing mystery, and restores the dear creature to our unceasing prayers; for I dare not suffer myself to fancy, even for a moment, that I am never to see her more.

Well, Charlotte, would you advise me to be very minute, and tell all the particulars of my friend's wedding, as well as who made the most splendid figure in the crowd of company assembled on the joyous occasion? O, by all means,

114 *The HISTORY of*

means, you cry. Be it so then—thus I obey.

Let me see—in my last, I think I told you, Monsieur la Friseur desired the honour of my company, and a beau of no small figure he was, I do assure you. While I sat contemplating his looks, as he glided round me with amazing grace and ease, I was deliberating with myself whether I had not better order him to put on his holiday suit, and accept the favour of my hand in the evening, as I had some *presentiments* that I should not get a finer partner if I took my chance of those provided by the master of the ceremonies; but on his burning the tip of my ear with his curling iron, I felt my temper so utterly discomposed, that I at once laid aside my noble purpose, though a moment's reflection convinced me I ought to have made a very different determination, since it was, as you
will

will grant, after maturely considering the affair, the only compliment a beau, in his humble station, could presume to pay a belle in mine; for what but the emotions occasioned by his having an object so perfectly beautiful placed in his view, could have produced that *tremblement* which procured me the burn? To tell me I was an angel (or, at least, would be so, by the time he had decorated my head according to his elegant taste) in plain terms, would perhaps, he might imagine, be rather taking too great a liberty, as he had never before had it consigned to his care, nor would then perhaps have been so honoured, had not my old friend *Dupré* been out of the way. Observe me well, Charlotte: I say, he might perhaps think that would be using too much freedom for the first time, and therefore ordered his tongs to whisper it gently in my ear as they
past

past every moment that way. They did so, that's most certain; but would you believe it? so indelicate was I, that I should positively have preferred the compliment expressed even in his broken English, to their language, however warm and animated. He left me, after parading round and round me for an age, *friséé et poudrée à merveille*—quite the thing I do assure you; though my good mamma humbly offered that it was, in her opinion, some few degrees more becoming and *degagéé* before he began.—Fine consolation for the torture I had endured! A pretty joke, thought I, if the beaus should be of this antiquated way of thinking. I did not, however, suffer an idea so horrid long to possess my imagination, but consoled myself with the consideration that they would not speak their sentiments quite so freely, whatever their wisdom might induce them to think;

think ; so I quietly put on a few ornaments.—This done, I proceeded in the pleasing task I was engaged in, and in due time essayed my new tissue. Shall I tell you how I looked?—impossible! I really felt for the bride and her fair guests. I was just then amazingly compassionate. Poor dear Miss Bellamy, thought I ; I am really vexed I should look so provokingly well.—Yet, what could I do, you know, but go ? which, accompanied by mamma, I did, as soon as the labours of the toilet were over. At this period of my history I must positively drop my design of being particular, since I find it a very different thing to write, in that minute manner, of half a hundred, to what it is of one, and that too, one's self: this is a subject a person never tires of, whatever the reader may do, nor indeed can one pretend to be quite so intimately acquainted with any other, for, “ Know
“ thy-

“thyself,” is a precept of infinite importance, and consequently slighted by none, but we are no where ordered to be so inquisitive about our neighbours. Though you and I, Charlotte, have met with some few good folks in our time, who seem to have inverted the command, having ten times more curiosity to know the affairs of others than their own. There are, perhaps, various readings and translations of this ancient maxim; that supposition is of infinite service and conveniency to many people on several occasions: the Scripture, for instance. Were it not for this supposition, we must conclude more than half of the pious inhabitants of this very metropolis were pursuing a course of life diametrically opposite to the tenour of that divine guide. This proves, I say, that there are for all doctrines various readings; unless you will be so censorious as to pronounce the people
above-

abovementioned, indifferent, or voluntarily ignorant, of either one version or the other. But pardon me, my dear, for a thought so uncharitable; I know you better. What! to suppose all the people of fashion rank and quality one fees—living, it must be confessed, in a manner perfectly different from the rules there prescribed—ignorant, or unacquainted with those so necessary truths!—O fie—by no means—Meerly, as I observed before, owing to the various translations. This point settled, which, lest you should have forgot during my dissertation, I must remind you was to apologize for not being able to say so much of the rest of the company as I had done of myself, I will proceed the best way I can.—Who can do more?

After conducting the bride, in proper form and parade to the Temple of Hymen, we returned to her father's, where, to do justice to Mrs. Osmond's taste,
we

we found an entertainment perfectly superb, the company numerous, and, in general, elegantly decorated. In the evening we were conducted to their ball-room, where excellent musick instantly inspired us with the spirit of dancing, which we did till pretty late, or, to speak more properly, pretty early. Now, Charlotte, guess who it was that had the honour of my fair hand, instead of the beau I had once formed the design of engaging—guess I say. How is that possible, you answer, when I have confessed there was so great a company?—Why, only Lord B-- child.

Think what were my emotions when he was introduced to me by that alarming title. I found he had been informed of my friendship for our Emilia, and perhaps desired to dance with me only on that account, for certain it is, he lavished a thousand compliments on
her

her for one he bestowed on me. He dies for her: declares there never was so angelick a creature. She was the continual subject of our conversation, and I am persuaded would still have been, had we been together till now. He makes the greatest jest of Sir Joseph's passion you can conceive, though I assured him he would undoubtedly be the man, if ever she returned disengaged and free.

No, my dear Miss Molesworth, cried he with the utmost fervor, nor any man on earth but myself, if I have power to prevent it. Ah, would to heaven she were once returned! I ask no more; or that I knew in what part of the world she was concealed: inform me but of this, and that she has not yet given her hand to another, and you will make me the happiest man in the universe.

VOL. I.

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What

What Charlotte can one think? Not that she voluntarily went off with him—far from my heart be a thought so injurious:—but I am now persuaded, by the conversation I have had with him, that he is the most likely man in the world to have taken her off either by force or stratagem. He was no doubt informed there was not a moment to be lost, as every one had heard of her intended marriage with Sir Joseph. There wanted not a long acquaintance to compleat the conquest she begun at the opera; the first sight was enough for one who seeks only the beauties of person in a mistress—those of the mind, I presume, are by him thought of far less importance. No wonder then he is so wholly her captive, possessed as she is of both in so eminent a degree.

What, I say, can one think? That he would deny it is plain, but this is

no proof of his innocence. A man of his turn must be too much accustomed to play the hypocrite not to be able to deny such a charge with a good grace. I own his specious manner puzzles me not a little; yet I think he could not appear so extremely, so very naturally anxious, to find her place of concealment were he really guilty. Heaven knows, as I have a thousand times said, and what indeed but this can I say? Nothing, Charlotte, with certainty. I am grown serious, nor can I possibly help it, when talking on this distressing subject. Imagine, if you please, the conclusion of our ball, and suffer me to end my epistle in this abrupt manner, since if I do not, I plainly foresee what follows will be in a very dreary stile. Adieu.

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.

LETTER XV.

To the SAME.

I Have been to visit Mrs. Stanhope. We had a great deal of conversation both about her own affairs and those of my dear Emilia. She is still in her first opinion in regard to her charming sister : on that subject, you may believe, nothing new remains to be said.

She tells me she has wrote in the most submissive and dutiful manner to her family ; but, if she is to judge by the answer, it was thought neither one nor the other. This is her easy way of talking on the most serious subjects, and, surely, the present is abundantly so. Time, she says, may do wonders ; she did not expect a favourable reception of her first address ; a little bustle is always necessary on these occasions.

When

When Harriot is pleased to return, added she, we shall see how affairs are to be settled, till then I make myself as easy as I can; and, to say truth, I never found that very difficult.

Mr. Stanhope was out, nor was I sorry, as I could not perhaps have spoke with the freedom I did had he been at home. She is following, with great exactness, the steps of her prudent mother: what those are I need not inform you. I'll lay my life, a very few months will see this pretty couple in as much haste to be quit of each other, as ever they were to run to Scotland. Can it be otherwise, when every thing is considered? But what of that? you'll say; parting is as fashionable as taking that excursion, and of course as agreeable.

We yesterday dined with her father. A good deal was said of Emilia, and, according to custom, a thousand different conjectures formed of her unaccountable

countable fate, though nothing was resolved on, as you may suppose, excepting this, indeed—that if ever she was found, and that still worthy of his hand, she should at all events be the wife of Sir Joseph. I endeavoured to plead her cause, upon a supposition that she had gone off to avoid that marriage, which yet I am far from believing; but found all my eloquence on that point lost and ineffectual. He has got Sir William's absolute promise, which he never will revoke; says, he has proved himself worthy of her, by a thousand instances of generosity. In short, I find there are obligations which he has no other method of repaying than by the sacrifice of his lovely daughter.—This comes of prudence and œconomy—the want of it I mean. Would to heaven fortune would favour him with some other means of discharging those fatal obligations! Why did not the foolish
old

old creature make choice of Caroline? His fortune would have been, I fancy, an irresistible temptation to her, who has no other ideas of happiness than those of dress and show. Why then, you'll ask, did she make choice of her present help-mate? — With the very same view, take my word for it. His uncle is rich, he has ever been considered as his heir, and her ladyship had not so humble an opinion of her own charms as to suppose an alliance with her would make him change that design.

I have bespoke your guitar, and promise you it shall be the most elegant you ever saw. I shall not wait till I return, but send it the moment it is finished. I know what it is to languish in expectation too well, to delay, especially in an affair of such importance. I had almost forgot to tell you I shall add to the books you name,

the elegant sermons so justly admired by our lovely Emilia. It is impossible to give you any idea of their innumerable beauties or excellence, by any thing I can say on the subject, nor would I anticipate the pleasure you are going to receive. Had we in general, preachers like him, we should not see so many drowsy, yawning congregations. Going to church is now, by many of the honest folks who have not yet wholly laid aside that old fashioned custom, meant as nothing more than going to take a comfortable nap. To this truth I have many and many a time been a witness: last Sunday, for instance.

No sooner were the prayers over, during which there is no getting a wink were one ever so well inclined; three or four old dowagers, who were my companions, as if by mutual consent, after feeling for the softest cushion, and taking

ng

ing a comfortable pinch of rappee, quietly laid their reverend heads back on the pew and began dreaming of quadrille with all their might. Query, might not more animated discourses than those we are usually entertained with, have power to drive away the spirit of slumber from our eyes? A dissertation now and then on that very subject, for instance? It would no doubt be thought rather extraordinary should the good man also compose himself to rest; but I vow, were I in his place I should frequently be inclined either to follow the example of my drowsy auditors, or to walk quietly home and leave them to their slumber.

Mamma begins to talk of returning to the country, though our friends will not suffer her to mention it, but you may expect her in a short time nevertheless. As for my ladyship, they, that is, Mr. Osmond's family, positively declare

I shall not leave them till they set off for Berkshire, nor then neither, if they can in the mean time prevail on me to accompany them there. This I refuse at all events; but how the first part of their scheme may succeed is not quite so clear.

Adieu, Charlotte, take the will for the deed in regard to the entertainment you will receive from this epistle, and believe me yours, as usual.

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



LETTER XVI.

To the SAME.

AH, Charlotte, I shall expire with joy! I am all extacy! O my beloved friend! my lovely Emilia!—Did I not tell you she was all purity and virtue? Did I not assure her mercenary

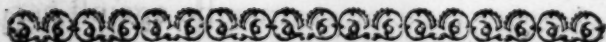
nary family that their charming daughter was superior to any of those womanish weaknesses they believed her influenced by? Have I not a thousand times declared she was incapable of deceit? She writes to me, Charlotte, I have her dear, her inimitable letter now before me. Yet, good heavens! what a situation! what an inextricable mystery! But begone my fears, let me no longer indulge any painful reflections. She lives, and will yet return to justify her suspected conduct to the vile censorious world. But read, read my sister, and rejoice with your Harriot, with every one, for every one already knows the innocence of my dear, my long lamented friend. Yes, Charlotte, I ran, I flew to communicate the unexpected, charming news, nor was my triumph small.

Did I not tell you, cried I, your Emilia was an angel? that she could

not act but in a manner doing honour to her sex? And then, with unspeakable joy and pride for having such a friend, I produced the welcome packet. But read it—my reflections on its amazing contents shall be the subject of my next, at present I can only talk of the dear creature and that in a manner scarce intelligible. Adieu—

Yours,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



L E T T E R XVII.

Miss BEVILLE, to *Miss* MOLESWORTH.

WELL do I know the anxiety, the tormenting suspense my amiable Harriot must have suffered during my tedious—

tedious—ah, how extremely tedious!—
 absence. I know the tender sensibility
 of your heart, I know how tenderly
 I am beloved by my charming friend:
 judge then what I must feel for the
 condition to which my very extraordi-
 nary adventure must have reduced you.
 Yes, my dear Harriot, amazing beyond
 conception is the affair that cruelly de-
 tains me from my astonished, and no
 doubt enraged, family; though heaven
 knows how little cause they have to
 blame their poor, imprisoned Emilia,
 whatever appearances may be against her;
 and I am not ignorant that they must
 be numberless. My affairs were in a
 situation which would give but too
 much room to form conjectures to my
 disadvantage, and the world is but too
 ready to condemn on the most trifling
 pretence. Yet not *all* the world—let
 me not be guilty of the very fault I
 am censuring in others: there are some,
 and

and I would hope not a few, who are endued with more noble and generous sentiments.—Need I add, my Harriot is one of that happy number? But you are no doubt impatient to hear the particulars of my surprising story; let me then endeavour to gratify your friendly curiosity as far as I am permitted. You will in the sequel comprehend the meaning of that expression.

You have already heard, I suppose, all that my family know of my adventure, which must indeed be but little.

My man had not left me ten minutes, in order to fetch me a thicker cloak, as I found it rather colder than I expected, when walking on towards Kensington-gardens, we observed a chaise following us, attended by a man on horse-back. I imagined it was company on the same design of airing with myself:—but, judge of my inexpressible terror when, having lost sight of Grosvenor,

venor-gate, it stopped, and the next moment I found myself forcibly seized and placed in the fatal carriage. Resistance would have been vain, had I been able to make any, but my senses forsook me, the moment I saw their horrid design, nor did I recover till we were some miles on our journey. I then found, to my infinite consolation, that Jenny was permitted to be my companion. By her care I was restored to life: but who can express the terror and consternation I was in to find the chaise driving like lightning, and all my prayers to be informed of their design, or by whom employed, entirely ineffectual. It was with the utmost difficulty she could prevent me from again falling into a swoon. The good creature's fears and astonishment gave place to her care and concern for me: but for her, I must have died with my dreadful apprehensions. She, to console

sole me as much as possible, told me she had, while I lay senseless, implored the man to tell her where they meant to carry us, or by whose order we were thus cruelly treated. Their answer was, we had nothing to fear, declaring no ill treatment was designed us, and begged we would be more composed. This was all they would say, nor would they repeat even that, but for the rest of the journey continued silent in spite of all our tears and importunities. Yet tell me, my dear Harriot, what could I think of these promises, after the step they had already taken? Was I not at that moment receiving the most cruel treatment that could be given? My reflections only served to torment and distress my imagination; I therefore wished it in my power to follow their advice.

Jenny, though not much less terrified than myself, rejoiced with great sincerity

sincerity at not being separated from me. By her persuasions I was at last prevailed on to be less alarmed, and trusting to that kind Providence which never wholly forsakes the innocent, I resigned myself with tolerable resignation to its care and protection. This thought gave me infinite consolation, nor did I fail to make it the continual subject of my meditations, during the rest of our perplexing journey. At length we stopped at an exceedingly good looking house. Dark as it was, I yet could see it appeared to belong to some person of distinction. Here I was received by an elderly decent looking woman and an old man, that I found was her husband. With great civility they led me into a very genteel apartment, where, in less than half an hour, a supper was served with perfect neatness. She behaved in the most respectful manner, and spoke with sense

on

on every subject, except that so interesting to my peace; on this she was invincibly dumb. In vain I implored her only to tell me by whose authority I was brought there, or what was their design. She assured me all that was a secret not permitted her to reveal, but begged I would endeavour to compose my spirits, and depend on her solemn assurance, that no farther ill was intended me; that I was, while I remained in that house, absolute mistress of it; how long that might be she knew not; her orders were to treat me with care and respect during my stay. Confinement within the house and gardens, added she, is all you have to apprehend; but those were both so large and pleasant, that she hoped I should not find it so disagreeable as I no doubt feared. Seeing I did not appear quite satisfied, notwithstanding all these declarations, she again repeated her protestations, adding,
I might

I might depend on being supplied not only with what cloaths I might want, but also whatever might contribute to my amusement. We have, said she, if you are fond of musick, a charming harpsichord; and for books, there is not a better furnished library in this country. Where that country is, heaven knows, for I have not the least idea (so great was my terror and confusion) of the road that was taken.

I'll leave you, my dear friend, to judge what was my astonishment at this strange account, and the thousand different conjectures I continually formed to no purpose, for so they certainly were, since no one would inform me whether any of them were right.

My fears are now in a great measure vanished, as I really see no appearance of deceit in my old governors. Need I tell my dear Harriot how many tedious days I have been under their care?

Alas!

Alas ! how slowly did those dreary, melancholy days glide on ! It is surely an age since I was so strangely deprived of liberty !

Finding all my hopes of regaining my freedom vain from any persuasions I could use, and you may believe all my little stock of eloquence was displayed on the important subject ; I took my companion's advice, and began to think of amusing myself the best way I could. The house is large and spacious, the furniture, though not quite in the modern taste, is nevertheless rich, and in exceeding good repair. The park and gardens, as the good woman at first assured me, are very extensive : the latter a good deal in the stile of the furniture, rather antiquated in its decorations ; but the park is delightful. Here I wander at full liberty to indulge my reflections free from interruption, nor is this privilege let me
tell

tell you, a trifling consolation: nothing is wanting but the return of summer to enliven the scene, but whether I am here to wait its arrival heaven only knows, as all enquiries of that nature are fruitless.

Finding, I say, all hopes of liberty at an end—though I gave my keepers leave to name their own terms—and also that of escaping absolutely impracticable, I next petitioned for permission to write; yet a moment's reflection convinced me, to my inexpressible grief, that this was not more likely to be granted than the other, since it was natural for them to suppose I meant to inform my friends of my situation, and consequently frustrate the design of those who had taken all this caution to conceal me. At last I fortunately thought of my present plan, which was to beg they would permit me to write, without mentioning where, or with whom I
was:—

was:—which by the way I could not, unless they would first inform me of it. They wished much, they said, it was in their power to oblige me, but their orders and instructions were very strict. I saw they were sincere.—I repeated my request with great earnestness, assuring them I would not give even the most distant hint that might lead to my retreat: only suffer me, said I, to inform my distressed family that I am well, I ask no more. Not to your family, answered the wife, this was absolutely forbid. To my friend then, cried I, charmed to find her likely to yield; to a young lady, who I am sensible is unhappy on my account. Ah, my dear madam, interrupting me, cried the good woman, what in fact is the difference, since she will no doubt soon acquaint them with the intelligence you send?—It is not, indeed, disobeying my orders in direct terms, as your family were only

only named, but you must be sensible your other friends were also included.—What can I say?—there is no resisting your sweetness and affability. — Write then to this young lady, though I am sensible this is no very honest distinction, but pardon me if I must beg leave to see what you write.—My bread depends on my fidelity to those who have reposed this confidence in me. I was fully persuaded no ill was designed you, and therefore promised to be faithful to my trust. But write, repeated she, on this condition, and forgive my scruples. I confess I judge of you only in this case by what I should certainly do myself, on a like occasion, were it in my power. Yes, my dear young lady, I should undoubtedly inform my friends of my situation the very first opportunity.

Hard as were the terms, I yet could not condemn her caution; she spoke
with

with prudence, I was sensible, and, therefore with great joy, agreed to her proposal, expressing my gratitude for the indulgence in terms that highly pleased her.

Thus, my dear Harriot, have I transmitted to you an account of my strange adventure, at least as much of it as I am myself acquainted with: when it will end heaven only knows; but I have this consolation given me, both by the good woman and her husband, that I have nothing to fear.—Ah! might they not with more justice assure me I have nothing to hope? What can they mean?—their directors I speak of—what, I say, can possibly be their design? Think for me, my dear friend, tell me, why am I thus confined? Alas! I forget while writing, that I am not permitted to receive your answer! Never more, perhaps, am I to enjoy that pleasing satisfaction! This thought destroys
the

the joy I felt on being allowed to send you this melancholy story. My paper will bear witness to the tears I at this moment shed—they blind my eyes. I must, for a while, lay down my pen and indulge them; when I am more composed I will again resume it, and add a few more lines to this, perhaps, last epistle I shall ever be suffered to send you—For a while, adieu.

A walk has a little recovered my late sinking spirits, and I return with pleasure to converse again with my friend. I know not how to finish this already too long letter, since writing it is the only happiness I am ever more likely to enjoy; for I dare not flatter myself they will a second time indulge me. Yet, let me remember your impatience to learn the fate of your Emilia; this consideration shall prevail; I hasten then to end it. What indeed is left me to say? It is true I have a thousand ques-

VOL. I. H tions

tions of infinite importance, which I can scarce forbear to ask; yet to what purpose, since it is not in your power to answer one of them? Good heavens! what must be the opinion of my dear family concerning this strange affair? What can they think of their unhappy daughter? Alas! it is but too evident! —Yet, could they believe me capable of so much premeditated deceit? Do they really conclude my flight was voluntary, and that, to avoid marrying the man they had made choice of, I had been guilty of this imprudence? Ah, they ought to have known me better! Yes, I will flatter myself they do, strong as appearances are against me. No, my dear Harriot, dreadful as the sacrifice would have been, I did not hesitate a moment whose happiness ought to be preferred; theirs or mine was the alternative. Could I, could any daughter, deliberate in such a case? may no other

other be ever so cruelly circumstanced! Alas, I die with apprehension for what they may suffer from this disappointment, when I consider how deeply they were interested in that event. Yes, Harriot, heaven is my witness, hateful as the man is to me, wretched as his morals, his sentiments undoubtedly are, not to mention the great disproportion in our years. In spite of all these, I say, I would this moment, were I at liberty, fly to save them from the distress they have so often assured me must follow my refusal, though, by giving him my hand, I should certainly forfeit every hope of happiness in this life. May Providence relieve their difficulties by some other means! Alas! my sister too! — who ever had so many woful subjects of affliction to meditate upon as your poor forlorn Emilia? Ah, tell me what has been the consequence of her imprudence! Again my

tears obstruct my sight.—Oh, Harriot, can they cease to flow while thinking of those friends, so infinitely dear to my heart?

You have no doubt been told of Lord B—'s imprudence in getting himself introduced to our family. He came several times and behaved in a manner so very particular, that every one saw it was on my account he had been so forward and intruding. He is much deceived if he thought it gave me any very favourable opinion of him: no, my dear, it on the contrary served only to persuade me he had too flattering a notion of himself. I have sometimes, for a moment, thought his lordship might be suspected in this affair, as he is a man of gallantry and intrigue: these are the soft terms the world has made choice of, to express vices which ought to be more severely treated. I own I had for some time the most dreadful

ful fears on his account; (as what could I think?) but, thank heaven, they are now removed, and I am persuaded there is no design of that horrid nature formed against me.

They enquire for my letter. A person is going to the Post-office. Must I then take leave of my Harriot, and, by ending it, deprive myself of a consolation so sweetly pleasing? Adieu then, my best loved friend, adieu. Need I bid you pity me? No, rather let me beseech you not to indulge your sorrow on my account, but with me implore heaven to deliver me from all my troubles. I have still, I find, a thousand things to say—Ah! why will they hurry me?

I blush that I have not yet mentioned your dear mamma and my amiable Charlotte, but pardon me and impute this apparent neglect to my unhappy situation. Present my unfeigned love

to both, and beseech them still to allow me a place in their friendship.—Ah! should they deny me this, should a misfortune like that be added to those I already suffer, I could not survive it.

Continue to love me, my dear Harriot, with that affection which must ever glow for you in the heart of,

Your unhappy,

EMILIA BEVILLE.



L E T T E R XVIII.

Miss HARRIOT MOLESWORTH, to
Miss CHARLOTTE MOLESWORTH.

I HAVE for this week past been prevented from writing to my Charlotte. I will not pretend to tell you by what, since it was in reality a thousand different things, and, consequently, might prove

prove but a tedious task either for my pen, or your patience: I will therefore only confess my fault and ask your pardon; forgiveness follows of course.

Now tell me, my dear sister, what are your thoughts of my Emilia's letter? Was there ever known or heard so strange an affair? Let us rejoice, however, that no dishonourable designs were formed against the dear creature, for I am persuaded there are not, however unaccountable her adventure.

How sweetly the dear girl writes! what affection for her (unworthy, I had almost said) parents! How few of us, Charlotte, have so much prudence, so much resolution to act up to those sentiments we, perhaps, know as well as she does, are right and commendable! So young a creature too! To know her duty and to practice it, was ever with her the same thing. But why this to you, who know her as well as I do,

and esteem her no less?—Yet, of what else can I write? Of her perplexing situation I can say nothing. The more I reflect the more I am at a loss, nor can I form any conjecture that yields me the smallest satisfaction.

I have not taken a moment's rest since I received the amazing packet: I ran first to one of her friends, then to another, communicating the delightful news of her safety, and boasting not a little of my sagacity, which, from the first, pronounced her blameless.

I have ceased for some time to mention the search that is continually making, since it is still as fruitless as ever, and I am persuaded must remain so, till the magician, in whose enchanted castle she is confined, thinks proper to release her.

Her father is I am told soliciting for a place which is just become vacant; despairing, I suppose, to obtain, by his
lovely

lovely daughter's means, that restoration of his fortune which was to have followed her marriage with Sir Joseph. Heaven grant he may succeed in his design! for as the income is considerable, he will no longer have occasion for that horrid resource. His promise, it is true, is still in force, but it shall not be my fault if he is not persuaded to revoke it; nay, at any rate, Emilia is free from hers, it was only given on a supposition that his affairs were ruined, unless she gave her consent: that plea, in case he succeeds, will, I say, be no longer of any weight. Should I ever see the dear creature again, I shall certainly use all my rhetorick to convince her she is under no obligation to become miserable.

As for the old knight's passion, of which he makes such a parade, I give myself but little concern about either it or his worship. By the course of

nature, not to mention that of his past life, the ridiculous soul cannot have many years to sigh, and should it hasten his departure a few years or so, the consequence will not be prodigiously dreadful. It is so long since we have had an instance of pure love carried to that romantick height, that I would give the world for a martyr, who will, by a proof so convincing, do honour to that now too much slighted passion. I enjoy the idea of all things, and will certainly give him a hint of that glory which will redound to his memory from an action so noble, the very first opportunity.

Mrs. Stanhope returned my visit in a day or two, since which I have seen her several times, both at her own house and at Mrs. Beverly's, where we happen both to visit. It will be thought ill-natured in me, should I say I already think her repentance begun; for which
reason

reason I will say nothing of the matter: you may however remember I have made this wise remark. Time will shew how far my penetration is to be depended on. She has not yet obtained any more favourable answer from her father: and her new uncle, on whose generosity she placed so much dependence, vows, with great composure, they may, for him, live upon love, unless they can, without his assistance, procure a more substantial diet. A pretty comfortable way the fair lady is in, to say truth! Who knows but it may teach her wisdom? Adversity is an excellent tutor, though not the most pleasing. By the way, I have more hopes from him, notwithstanding this speech, than I have from her father. He was ever particularly fond of his nephew, and, I would persuade myself, he only means to let him, for a while, feel the effects of his imprudence, that

156 *The* HISTORY *of*

he may profit by the lesson it will teach him. I wish this prediction may be accomplished, were it but to confirm my character for wisdom and foresight, of which I am not a little proud.

Adieu, Charlotte, I am going with the Miss Cathcarts, and some other fair creatures, to see the School for Lovers. One ought, you know, never to lose any opportunity of gaining instruction, particularly on that important subject, as it is a character we all hope to shine in one day or other. I expect to be almost stifled with heat, but that's a trifle in so good a cause; it will, however, be the last time I shall flourish in that academy this season.

I have sent your things, and, if my abigail is not deceived, for they were intrusted to her care, you will get them next Thursday. I shall find you so harmonious when I return, there will be no bearing you. Adieu, Monsieur du
Pré

Pré is impatient for the honour of decorating my ladyship's head.—No resisting the importunities of so smart a beau—For the very last time—in this epistle I mean—I once more bid you adieu.

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



LETTER XIX.

To the SAME.

WHO do you think was in the next box to ours the other night at the play? I told you, I believe, I was going to see the School for Lovers. I had not been half an hour in the house before I wished it had rather been the school for wives, in hopes the person I am going to mention might have received some profitable hints from the performance. Do you already guess I mean

mean our friend Mrs. Stanhope? If you do I give you credit for a considerable share of sagacity, since the multitude of untaught matrons made it no easy conjecture. Ours, Charlotte, is a land of liberty; we boast much of that blessing, you know, and, upon my word, the good ladies here seem to be as great advocates for it as the most zealous politician amongst us. It was, indeed, no other. There she was, gay and easy, as if in full possession of all her new uncle's treasure; coqueting with every smart fellow within her sight. I, like a simple creature, cast my eyes around, surprised not to see her so dearly purchased swain by her side, when lo, Mr. Cathcart pointed him out to me, peeping at his prudent help-mate from behind the scenes, where he was no doubt returning her compliment on some of the nymphs of that benevolent society. I told you how it would be:

'tis

'tis nothing more than following the taste of the times—free and easy. What woman of any spirit would be out of fashion? I see nothing that would in fact be a greater inconveniency than to be really and soberly fond of one's husband. Poor Miss Osmond is in a fair way to make the most antiquated domestick animal you ever saw. She, good soul, thought her spouse the smartest beau in the place. And, *entre nous*, Charlotte, was not much deceived. I do all I can to cure her of this old-fashioned weakness, but have very little hopes of succeeding, because neither precept nor example will convince her that it is one. For the precept, as I told you, she is often indebted to me; the example is not in my power.—Would to fortune it was! But, believe me, if I expect any such felicity, I must with all speed set off for the country, since matrimony is within an ace of being

being totally abolished in this improving town. One hears now and then of such a thing, it is true, but it is generally by way of frolick, merely for the sake of a trip to Scotland, and the hopes—or rather certainty—of parting in a few weeks, or so, after their return. Here you remind me of Mrs. Cathcart, of whom I have just been giving so different an account. Very true, but her case is singular; I question whether we shall in our days hear of another instance of the kind. I will not pretend to excuse or account for her conduct, but to be sure, a wedding in that sober old-fashioned way, gives one, to say truth, rather a poor opinion of her spirit, a thing so necessary, as Mrs. Stanhope says, for people who mean to make any figure in life. What a contrast to the amiable character of my Emilia!—But peace be with her, say I,
for

for my friend's sake; as her relation she cannot be indifferent to me.

I will not enter on her story, as I have not one word to say that can give you the smallest consolation: every thing remains in its primitive darkness and perplexity. Let me then avoid it, since it never fails to sink my spirits, and will consequently bring my epistle to an untimely end.

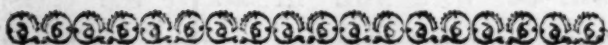
My mother leaves us next week, and will be with you in about ten days. She intends to make a visit to Lady Brudnel in her way: to this I advised her by all means, as it is what she has so long promised her. You will guess by this that I have consented to stay the requested time—but not a day longer, I give you my honour—not the least design of going to Berkshire.

Lady Beville below?—Nay, then my epistle will come to an end without any violent dejection of spirits, for, thank
my

my stars, but for the remembrance of our Emilia's situation, they were never better. Pray heaven her ladyship may bring me no news to give them a disagreeable turn!—Grief and joy go generally hand in hand. But adieu—I must be gone. Let me not delay giving my company to the mother of my friend.

Yours,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



LETTER XX.

To the SAME.

NO, my dear, a mere visit—inferior as you please. Are not most visits so, Charlotte, where friendship is not the inducement? I need not observe how very seldom that enlivener is to be found

found in the circles of the great—or small either, to say truth.

Not one word of Emilia—of information I mean, for we spoke of her a great deal. My opinion was again delivered with infinite wisdom and gravity. My lady sometimes, notwithstanding the dear creature's affecting letter, shook her head.—Is it in nature she should still doubt her prudence? Ah, how little does she deserve to be blessed with such a daughter! My friend's sentiments are above her weak comprehension; she cannot form an idea of any being superior to herself, and is, no doubt, conscious she would in such a case have acted just as she supposes her daughter to have done.—Forgive me, Emilia, this liberty, I know it is one you never suffered me to take with any of your family, nor indeed any other person without a sweet rebuke. But why then will they pretend to believe what

what you are incapable of, because, truly, they cannot at once unravel this perplexing mystery?—But faith, Charlotte, as well as matrimony, is almost abolished. We believe now nothing but what we see clear as the noon day: nor does that always convince us, since we are continually putting wrong constructions on those actions which are perfectly innocent, though we see never so clearly they are so.

She mentioned the place Sir William is soliciting for, and with justice appeared extremely happy at the prospect; for I believe his affairs are in a situation that greatly wants a smile or two from lady fortune—her daughters have visited him long enough.

My mother has fixed her day for leaving town, and is, as I told you, determined to pay Lady Brudnel a visit, *en passant*. You may expect her about the end of the month, and your
humble

humble servant the end of the following. It would be an unpardonable rudeness to depart without honouring Vauxhall and Ranelagh at least once a piece with my presence--they are soon to be opened. When I have done them this favour, I will quietly take my leave and follow the sober example mamma sets me, and, like her, quit all these vanities for the more calm and peaceful joys of the country. Do not fancy my residence in this world of gaiety and splendor has made me lose my taste for its infinitely superior beauties. No, Charlotte, depend upon it I shall return to our rural mansion with inexpressible pleasure. Nothing but the pressing intreaties of Mrs. Osmond and her family should have induced me to stay a day behind my mother; but one must sacrifice a little to civility; one cannot always follow our inclinations, without wholly laying aside complaisance,

fance, so necessary to render society agreeable.

Adieu — Mamma will write by this post to confirm what I say of her journey ; and, that I may not engross every subject, and thereby render her design the more difficult, I will conclude.

This very good-natured consideration might perhaps gain credit with you who have so great an opinion of my veracity, but for this very reason I will not impose upon you. No, my dear, let me modestly confess my ending so soon is merely for want of something wherewith to embellish the residue of my paper. It is no easy matter, let me tell you, to write every week, unless the world would please to furnish me with some more extraordinary occurrences than it has lately done. Plays, balls, drums, routs, are subjects, in my opinion, so exceedingly uninteresting, that I cannot prevail on my pen to dwell

dwell on the description, and these are the only amusements I have been, or am likely to be, engaged in, during my stay. It is nevertheless evident the spirit of knight errantry, or else the power of enchantment is not utterly ceased in our land: witness the amazingly strange and unaccountable fate of our Emilia. But, it is plain, I am not destined to be chosen as the heroine of any such adventure. I find I may parade about from one diversion to another, without the smallest danger of being arrested in my course by either knight or magician. I am more than half persuaded my dear friend is in the power of the latter, who, to preserve her from becoming the wife of her antient lover, has, by his art, raised the castle which now is honoured with her presence; as also, by the touch of his wand, he no doubt produced the venerable

rable pair whom he has appointed her guardians. All this, in the days of yore, would have met with an easy belief; nor can I now, with all my wisdom, give any more probable account of her. Would to heaven the good old souls would suffer her to continue with me her correspondence! I see nothing to hinder such an indulgence; I mean on the same condition of her first; since it is too sure our ignorance, in regard to her situation, remains as invincible as before her packet arrived. Once more

Adieu.

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.

I. E. T.

LETTER XXI.

To the SAME.

I NEVER make apologies for not writing, because I am persuaded one can never—I had almost said—find such as ought to be accepted; for, surely, if in health, and in a land like ours, flowing with pens, ink and paper, one may, if violently inclined to it, always find time and opportunity for one line at least. Conscious that I have been at no loss for any of the above-mentioned requisites, I am silent, and will, like a good sister—as I nevertheless am—take all your reproofs with the spirit of meekness: but that my trembling epistle (for I assure you it feels some tremours at the thoughts of appearing before you) may not, as soon as opened, be committed with a disdainful air to the flames, I will, in the first lines, lest you

VOL. I.

I

should

should not deign to cast your eyes on the following, tell you a piece of news which will, I am persuaded, at once dispel your frowns, and deck your face with all its usual smiles and graces. Nay, this very speech might, I think, do the business, if you are not very, very angry indeed.

But to keep my promise. Mamma is on her journey, and is, I presume by this time, in full chat with her old friend Lady Brudnel. Now, Charlotte, frown if you dare.—O, you relax, do you? Very well; then I may proceed.

Without farther preamble or preface then, I am this very identical evening going to Ranelagh: it is the first night, and all the world is to be there. A pretty little select party, you'll grant—Lord B—is one of ours; his lordship and your sweet sister are, you must know, amazingly gracious, and were it not for the idea of his Emilia, of whom

whom he talks and raves continually, I know not what might happen; but her divine image, he tells me, is so deeply engraved on his heart that not Venus, with all her train of graces, would her goddessship deign to attempt the conquest, could render him inconstant nor efface it from his breast: so, you know, Charlotte, it would have been a folly in me, after so flaming a declaration, to try the experiment, though, to say truth, I have, nevertheless, been at the expence of a few smiles, airs and so forth, by way of gaining the little attention he has to spare, and have succeeded tolerably well; but I believe an opportunity to talk to me of his lost fair one was a more powerful attraction than either one or the other. Wonderous humble, methinks.—But I am so sincere and open-hearted, you know, that I cannot dissemble.

Mrs. Stanhope is to be there, though not with us. I saw her yesterday, and as civility, I simply thought, required, asked for her dear spouse. Ah, heaven knows, cried she, for I do not; nor indeed is it a wife's business. What, so soon fallen into that easy state? returned I; why, surely, my good friend, you forget the hazard you ran to gain this husband, for whom you now express so much indifference. Is it possible you should really be as much so as your answer would persuade me? I know, said she, what idea my answer may convey, but I am no more indifferent than is perfectly consistent with the character of a wife of fashion and spirit. Would you, my dear Miss Molefworth, have the man eternally at my side? You never see me, that you do not seem surprized you do not also see him. Stay till you are married, my dear, you will then be sensible you are
not

not to look for the husband in company with his wife. Fie upon you, Harriot, the very idea of such a party is more than enough to give one the vapours: I mean after they have been married above a month. How is it possible, after so long an intimacy, they should have any thing new left to say to each other? and a dull repetition of the same simple things they must, during that tedious time, have uttered, you may easily believe cannot be very desirable. Surely, child, you might imagine this to be the case, were you only to judge by what you must have a thousand times experienced, while confined to the society of your own family only, when in the dreary country. Could you, Harriot, in that case, find any very sprightly conversation to amuse yourself with? Confess you could not, and believe me it is the very case of every married pair. But do not

fancy I was deceived in my expectations:—no such thing. I saw every one around me in the same situation, nor did I either expect or desire to be singular. The sober, antiquated notion you seem to have formed of matrimony would kill me in a month with spleen and vapours: and so, my dear sober Harriot, never apply to me when you want any information concerning my husband, for whom you express so much concern.

This, Charlotte, will give you some idea of her present situation. Mr. Stanhope is still inexorable, nor will on any terms be prevailed on to see his nephew. I am afraid he is more seriously offended than I at first believed. As for her father, I am positive he will not be one grain more complying, were it only to save himself the mortification of exposing his circumstances. While he remains in his present disposition,

sition, no fortune can be expected. What effects the expected place may produce I don't know. Most people, I find, are of opinion he will get it, as his interest is good. If he should be so fortunate, I shall rejoice very sincerely on various accounts: Emilia the chief, you may suppose. For, in spite of Sir Joseph's constancy, by which I presume he means to atone for all his former infidelities, she shall never be his. I protest I would rather marry the old soul myself, than see her so disposed of. I think I should suit him much better, if he did but know his own interest. Heavens, what an ill-matched couple would they make! They might do admirably to sit for the picture of death and the lady. You cannot be unacquainted, Charlotte, with that old ditty: it's a favourite song of our Martha's, who I suppose is not yet cured of her quavering.

176 *The* HISTORY *of*

Here's another letter for you, filled with nothing, I was going to say, and would say, did it not sound a little paradoxical; but 'tis certainly within an ace of being so, nevertheless.

The hour for dress approaches, and then away to Ranelagh.

Yours,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



L E T T E R XXII.

To the SAME.

WITH what amazing rapidity the hours wing their flight in this giddy town! I can hardly credit my senses when I recollect how long I have already been in it. This would imply two things which are nevertheless not absolutely

absolutely true—viz. that I have not regretted my absence from home, nor found any degree of insipidity or languour in pleasures I have continually been engaged in. But that neither of these consequences unavoidably follow, is very evident, since I have, in the first place, a thousand times wished to return, and secondly, in the course of our hurrying visits and other diversions, as often gravely pronounced them all vanity and vexation of spirit. Reconcile all this if you can, for, it is certain, time has escaped me almost unnoticed; unemployed I might with truth have asserted, or at least to any purpose. Thus much for that important article, for what can be more so, though so generally wasted and mispent? An excellent time, you'll say, for making that wise remark, when just confessing I have been throwing away so much without any sort of concern till

it was irretrievably gone. You'll perhaps tell me, it looks as if I only lamented that it was so, and that I had no hopes of spending what is to come in the same manner. Very well, Charlotte, stay till I am with you, I will then discuss this point at leisure, and hope to clear myself from any such accusation.—I shall, in company with Mr. Osmond's family and Mrs. Cathcart, who spends the summer with her father in Berkshire, take leave of London next Monday: whether you will hear from me again is not certain. I have got Mrs. Stanhope's promise that she will write to me very punctually of whatever may happen to either herself or family: you may believe I did not forget to include my Emilia. I cannot say I expect her to be so very exact, as she finds full employment for her time without the article of writing: however, unless she can send me some information

Miss BEVILLE. 179

information concerning her charming sister, I shall make myself very easy about the matter. Adieu: I only send this to tell you I am on the wing, so you need not look upon it as a letter, unless you please, but a card, a note, or whatever you think it most resembles.

Yours,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.



L E T T E R XXIII.

Mrs. STANHOPE to *Miss* MOLES-
WORTH.

DON'T be angry Harriot, I have positively begun to write to you at least fifty times, and have as often been prevented by one impertinent intruder or other, so no breach of promise, whatever you may be pleased

to think of the matter. By the way, I did not, till I tried, know the difficulty of keeping it when one has nothing to say. Why then, you'll ask, do I attempt it, since you only desired to hear from me in case any thing extraordinary came to pass? Very true—here follows my answer. A fear that your ladyship should have thought fit to believe some of the said extras had happened and I had neglected to tell you of them—no desire to lose your esteem, it's plain—and it is as plain that every thing remains *in statu quo*, not only amongst my frowning relatives, but the rest of the world. As for Emilia, to tell you the truth, I give her up as a lost creature in the literal sense of the words, for what is become of her no mortal has yet been able to discover. It will make a most delightful history if ever she should return. I am determined it shall be published,

it will be the finest novel imaginable. One adventure like hers is enough, when properly embellished, to grace half a dozen volumes; but should it not, my good man and me may perhaps, in time to come, furnish materials for a page or two. Shall I tell you a secret, Harriot? — No great secret neither, I believe. The dear creature has not only taken unto himself a wife, but also a mistress. True, as you are alive — at least I am told so. He feared, no doubt, I should not have taste and spirit enough myself to spend his immense fortune, and therefore procured me this assistance. I am not quite certain whether it is truth, but shall endeavour to be so as soon as possible, and if I find it is — why, you know, I must seek out for some more worthy object on whom to bestow my smiles, as one would not willingly be outdone in these innocent amusements: besides,

besides, one should always follow a good example; not to mention a little dear revenge. The creature's a mere fright: you have seen her, I am sure, Harriot. Only Miss *** the player. Had not his uncle proved himself such an errant miser, the thing would not have been so much amiss, since it is in reality quite the taste; but as our affairs are situated at present, he might, I think, have dispensed with that piece of gallantry. Jealousy is out of the question, I have, thank my stars, too much spirit for that; but, as I said before, a little revenge or so, for being slighted, on such a creature's account, may do well enough by way of variety.

Adieu. I will write again very soon. Compliments to your mamma and Charlotte.

Yours,

C. STANHOPE.

P. S.

P. S.—True, as you are alive. Since I wrote the above, Miss Sackville came in, and, as a mighty secret, informed me of the whole affair: her brother, as a secret, told it to her, and as such, or not such, just as you like, I now tell it to you. It is fact, Harriot, he is absolutely with that vile creature for ever. But the beauty of all is, that madam is at the same time mistress to Lord W. My sweet spouse is no doubt the favourite, and the other, I suppose, her purse-bearer. Should he meet at her lodgings—but with all my spirit, I have only to make myself easy, which thank my stars, I can, and him uneasy, which, please my stars, I'll attempt. So, my dear, with this wife-like disposition I bid you adieu. Emilia might not, perhaps, applaud my resolution, nor you neither perchance, but you are a pair of country-bred souls, and have not yet entered into the holy state of matrimony.

matrimony. You need not, however, read this postscript to your prudent mother, she can be no judge in this case, having had such a fellow-mind for her help-mate. I told you, I believe, that the creature is a mere fright when off the vile stage. I had half forgot one peice of good news Miss Sackville brought me to qualify the above, which is, my father has absolutely got the place he has been soliciting, and went to court yesterday to return thanks, &c. &c. Who knows what effect this peice of good-fortune may have upon his unchristian heart? Excuse me, my dear, but what can be more so than not to forget, and forgive? Some cases, indeed, are excepted — a Mistress to one's husband, for instance.

Adieu,

CAROLINE STANHOPE.

L. E. T.

Miss BEVILLE. 185

LETTER XXIV.

Miss BEVILLE, to *Miss* MOLES-
WORTH.

A GAIN, after an age of silence I write to my beloved friend. But, good heavens! how shall I find language to express as I wish the amazing things I have to tell her? What a discovery! Prepare, my dear Harriot, prepare to hear what will astonish you. Rejoice with your Emilia that providence at length permits her to write, and that too with freedom. Yes, my dear friend, my days of imprisonment are at an end, the veil is withdrawn, and I am no longer ignorant by whom or for what purpose I have been thus cruelly treated. How shall I begin to gratify that curiosity I have no doubt raised in your friendly breast? For I will not--no--
I am

I am convinced my happiness is still dear to you. I know you love me still, nor have even for a moment judged harshly of my conduct, notwithstanding the strange affair that has so long detained me from you. I am conscious what my sentiments would have been had our fates been changed. Had my cruel, or at least very extraordinary, case been yours, I am sensible I should not have found it possible to believe you deserving of censure. But why this to my Harriot? Attend then, and hear by what accident I am thus permitted to renew my correspondence.

I had no sooner dispatched my last packet, which I flatter myself you received, as I sent it to London, knowing you was to be there about that time, than I determined patiently to wait the issue of my adventure, convinced so strange an affair could not have happened without the permission

of

of Providence. From that time I endeavoured to amuse myself with reading. I found, as Mrs. Simpson had told me, there was an excellent library, with a variety of authors in all languages. These, and the harpsichord, shared a considerable portion of my tedious time. I also frequently walked, accompanied by Jenny, who, to do her justice, has never shewn the least impatience for her own confinement, but has, by every thing in her power, endeavoured to prevent my dejection of spirits, which, in spite of all my resolution, is but too often the case.

I gave up all hopes of gaining the information I so earnestly wished, and, therefore, no longer pressed my jailors on the subject. In this manner I past my joyless hours, waiting with a tolerable degree of patience for my deliverance, or whatever else was to be my fate. Ah, how little did I dream
of

of the manner in which that deliverance was to be effected !

I was, two days since, sitting at my window, which fronts the avenue leading to the house, reading with great attention, when the sound of voices, I had not been accustomed to hear, made me hastily turn my eyes that way, though, heaven knows, I little imagined I should find in one of those who had thus interrupted my meditations, the person who should procure me the happiness I at this moment enjoy.

A young gentleman, of a most amiable appearance, had just dismounted, and given his horse to the servant that accompanied him, and was asking a number of questions with great earnestness of Mr. Simpson: but what surprised me most was, the confusion and anxiety visible both in him and his wife. I could observe them every moment
casting

casting up their eyes to my windows with looks of infinite care and solicitude. In a few minutes they all entered the house, and I again took my seat in a situation of mind it is utterly impossible to describe. In the most dreadful suspense I waited near an hour, scarce daring to breathe with freedom, so great were my apprehensions. But judge what were my emotions, to see the young gentleman enter my apartment with looks in which I could read astonishment, shame and confusion! He stood for some moments silent, as if at a loss in what manner to begin a conversation he yet plainly wished to engage in. During that time I had leisure to examine him with more attention than I could do while viewing him from my window. But ah! Harriot, how shall I give you any idea of his inimitably lovely form?—Never did eyes express such amiable sweetness, never was person

son adorned with so much manly beauty! So perfectly graceful! a manner so engaging! What shall I say to you, my dear friend, how confess that, during that moment of wonder and surprise, my heart felt emotions it had ever till then been a stranger to? Ah, Harriot, could you but see the lovely youth that occasioned them, you could not but pardon my weakness, in thus resigning my liberty before I even knew the name or design of my conqueror. The agitation so visible in his countenance when he first entered, by degrees gave place to looks more soft and pleasing. At last, approaching me in the most graceful manner, and observing how extremely I was embarrassed with his unexpected visit, how shall I presume, madam, said he, with infinite sweetness in his voice, to mention what yet I die with impatience to have explained? I blush, nor know in what words to express

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press my indignation for what I have already heard, and am no less confounded, while I beg leave to enquire, from yourself, by what means, or on what design, my father's house has been thus long honoured with a guest so lovely? All I have been able to learn from those who have the care of it, has only served to excite my curiosity to know from yourself the particulars, which are doubtless of a very extraordinary nature. However deeply I might interest myself in your affairs, before I had the honour of seeing you, permit me to assure you I am now infinitely more so, nor shall I ever again know a moment's peace, should my fears prove just, and you are detained here contrary to your inclination. Good heavens! and that too by any of my family! — Impossible! — But tell me then, I beseech you, and deliver me from my dreadful apprehensions, which increase every
every

every moment, while I see before me the most lovely and amiable of her sex.

I am infinitely more perplexed now, sir, said I, than I was before your unexpected arrival. You tell me I am in your father's house: how then can I believe it possible you should be so entirely unacquainted with their motives for treating me in the strange and unaccountable manner they have so long done? That it is by their ungenerous contrivance I am here I can no longer doubt, but what their design or motives for tearing me thus from the arms of my friends and family, who must, during my tedious absence, have suffered a thousand fears and apprehensions, is what I cannot give you the smallest account of. Permit me to observe, it appears to me very extraordinary that their son, as you, sir, declare yourself to be, should be ignorant of what is, if I

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am to judge by their measures, so extremely interesting to them.

Ah, spare me, madam, cried he with emotion, spare that unfortunate son, unfortunate only since you have supposed him capable of so much baseness. I dare not reflect, I dread now to see those parents I hoped to meet with so much joy and satisfaction after an absence of three years. Good heavens! how greatly must they be changed during that time! Yes, madam, it is doubtless owing to this absence that I am ignorant of this astonishing affair. Spare me then, I intreat you, nor look on me with that horror which, as their son, you have but too just reason to believe I merit, and permit me to assure you the happiness or misery of my future life depends on the explanation I am so impatient to receive. I go, madam, said he rising, I go to make a more particular enquiry into this perplexing

VOL. I. K story.

story. Heaven grant my apprehensions may prove groundless, and that I may not be deprived of every hope. He stopped, and bowing, left me with looks that expressed a thousand things more tender than any he had uttered. But judge, my dear Harriot, what were my tormenting reflections when I was, by his absence, left at liberty to indulge them! Ah, cried I with an emotion I could not restrain, what will become of me if I am indeed obliged to refuse my esteem to one so perfectly amiable, and who appears so worthy of it? By what means can I have given offence to any of his family? how have I deserved this cruel treatment from persons of whom, it is plain, I have not the least knowledge? Ah, why is the son of parents so unjust, thus inexpressibly lovely? A flood of tears succeeded this thought, nor can I give you any reason for my shedding them: the prospect of deliver-

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ance, one would naturally suppose, should have produced a very different effect: but, certain it is, my dear Harriot, that my tears fell in great abundance. He found me indulging them when he returned; but here I despair of giving you any idea of his emotions when he saw me in this condition. Without reflecting on the impropriety of such a behaviour, circumstanced as we were, or the very short date of our acquaintance, he was in a moment at my feet, when, taking my hand, which he with a respectful, yet infinitely tender air pressed to his lips; implored me rather to pity than condemn him; declared he would rather suffer the most cruel death than see me endure a moment's pain; begged I would not refuse him my compassion, and assured me, the dreadful situation, in which he then saw me, had reduced him to one which

greatly stood in need of that consolation.

You would be but little honoured, sir, said I, by the esteem you seem so desirous to obtain, were I capable of so much injustice as to condemn the innocent with the guilty. Rise sir, I beseech you, and depend upon it, it will give me great pleasure to find you neither approve, nor are concerned in, this extraordinary affair. Yes, sir, continued I, I am persuaded you are not. Unaccountable as the whole proceeding has been, I will believe you were ignorant of it till your arrival; but, be assured, it is not from me you can receive the information: I am as impatient to learn as you possibly can be. You, sir, profess to be greatly shocked at the treatment I have met with: convince me of your sincerity, by giving me liberty to leave a place so justly displeasing. This, sir, is all I ask: obtain
me

me this permission, and I will ever gratefully acknowledge the unexpected favour.

Give you permission, madam! Ah, do not, distress me by a request so mortifying. Is it possible you should still think so unfavourably of me? — Yet, can I hope you should ever think otherwise of one so nearly allied to the amazingly changed, since I left him, Mr. Beauchamp?

Can you, Harriot, form to yourself any idea of my astonishment, on hearing him pronounce that well-known name?

Mr. Beauchamp! cried I with the utmost eagerness; good heavens! what do I hear? Is it possible that you, sir, should be nephew to Sir Joseph Beauchamp, and this the house of his brother? Ah, sir, you know not into what astonishment your words have thrown me, or what a conjecture they have at

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this

this moment given rise to in my long perplexed and tormented imagination. I cannot express to you my amazement and surprise—this strange affair is no longer a mystery. It is now extremely clear what were their motives for their ungenerous proceedings. Pardon me, Mr. Beauchamp, for the severity of my expressions, but I am persuaded you will not think they require an apology, when you are acquainted with the too just reasons I have to use them.

You may believe, my dear friend, the long wished-for explanation could not fail to succeed this unexpected discovery. I immediately informed him of what I imagined had induced his family to act in this strange and unjustifiable manner, avoiding, as much as possible, any expression that might give him an unfavourable opinion of mine. It is not, my dear Harriot, in the power
of

of language to give you any idea of our mutual surprise.

Ah, my too amiable Miss Beville, cried he, again throwing himself at my feet, with every mark of grief and despair in his looks and manner, what then is left me but misery and wretchedness? What can I in justice expect but your hatred and contempt?

Rise, sir, said I, nor pay me so bad a compliment as to believe me capable of indulging resentment even against my enemies: how then should I entertain any for one who never injured me? That I have been cruelly treated is, indeed, most certain, but that you have been no way accessory to it I am as fully persuaded, and consequently you have nothing to apprehend from my displeasure.—I have only to repeat my request: suffer me immediately to leave this house that I may, by my return, relieve my family from their cruel

anxiety and suspense. This, sir, is all the favour I require, and for this I will look upon myself as infinitely obliged.

Yes, madam, said he, you are at liberty. Leave me, Miss Beville, leave me to my unfortunate destiny. May you be happy—happy to the utmost of your wishes, whatever is the fate of him whose future felicity is wholly in your power. However unfavourable this dreadful moment may be for such a declaration, yet let me again repeat it, you are, and ever shall be, the mistress of my fate. Yes, madam, you are at liberty. Fly then to that supremely happy uncle, and by compleating his felicity, ensure my death. Thank heaven this will be the consequence, and thus will all my pains be ended. He was going to add something more in the same dying strain, which I prevented, by telling him, the liberty he had granted would but half compleat my happiness,

happiness, unless he would also inform me in what part of the world I had so long been confined, and direct me in what manner I could, with the most expedition, return to London.

Imagine, Harriot, if you can, the joy he expressed for my deigning, as he was pleased to call it, to consult and honour him with my commands. You may also guess he offered with transport to be my guide to any part of the world. I found, on enquiry, that my aunt's house was considerably nearer than London, and at once determined to go immediately there, not doubting her readiness to receive me, whatever she might have heard to my disadvantage. I informed him of my design, but begged leave, for many obvious reasons, to decline his offered company. His carriage, I told him, I would with pleasure accept, unless he could procure me one from any neigh-

bouring town, which would be still more agreeable.

Cruel Miss Beville! cried he tenderly, taking my hand, thus to destroy the pleasing hopes I had formed! — Yet, dare I presume, after what has past, to accuse you of cruelty?—No, let me silently bear my unfortunate destiny, I will no more torment you with my fruitless complaints.—You shall be obeyed, though in parting with you I give up every flattering hope of future bliss. The first moment I saw that lovely form, my heart confessed itself your captive. Ah, what prospect then of ever regaining its liberty, since I have also heard that enchanting voice pronounce sentiments so infinitely sweet and amiable!—No, my charming Miss Beville, whatever Providence may destine to be my lot, without your esteem it must be wretched. I may perhaps never see you more—I expect it not—

Ah

Ah how little do I deserve it! For dare I flatter myself your justly incensed family will ever regard, but with horror, the unfortunate son of those who have so basely injured them?—Ah, why did I ever return, if but to be witness to a scene like this?—Why am I obliged to refuse my esteem and respect to those parents I have ever till now believed so justly intitled to it?

In short, my dear Harriot, he so irresistibly implored me to honour him with a place in my friendship, that it was not in my power — and perhaps less in my inclination — to refuse his request. It is true, by his accent, and the manner which accompanied his eloquently urged petition, it was not difficult to devine that friendship alone would not give him quite so much consolation as he desired; but this was the term he made choice of to express sentiments infinitely more tender. His
K 6 eyes,

eyes, indeed, spoke in a manner not to be misunderstood: their soft language was perfectly intelligible: but as I had never formed, even for a moment, the design of disappointing my father's high-raised expectation, I determined, if possible, to avoid any more explicit declaration, which it was, however, extremely plain he wished to make. Yes, my dear friend, dreadful as the sacrifice will be—and, let me confess, it will be infinitely more so, since I have seen my too amiable deliverer—it must be done, if still required. Ah, would to heaven I durst flatter myself it would not! with what joy would I then return! how different would be my emotions from those which at present distract my tortured heart! But I fly, my dear friend, to restore their peace: their embarrassed circumstances demand this cruel expedient, they tell me—and dare I doubt their word?—Yes, Harriot,

Harriot, they have a thousand times assured me it is their only resource. Ah why did I at a time so unfortunate see this too engaging nephew? Why was my trial to be rendered so infinitely more severe?—But it is the will of Providence — let me not then repine. When I have determined the manner of my journey I will finish and dispatch this tedious epistle. I go this moment to consult with my charming deliverer, and to settle the important affair.—Adieu till I return.

* * * * *

Every thing is settled. I leave this place to-morrow, and, as I at first determined, go immediately to my aunt's. Why, I repeat, ah why, my dear Harriot, did I ever see this too engaging youth?—Alas how little was I, till now, acquainted with my own heart! I ever
believed

believed it insensible to every sentiment but that of friendship; till this fatal time it knew no other.—Ah Harriot, I greatly fear it can no longer boast of that insensibility!—But let me not too minutely examine its sentiments.

Tell me, my dear friend, can any thing be more extraordinary than this unexpected meeting? He tells me, he hoped to have found his family here, it being about the time they usually left London: he had not exactly informed them when he should arrive, being determined to surprise them.

Jenny brings me his compliments: he begs I will oblige him with the honour of my company at dinner.—Why should I refuse him this trifling favour? It is but a small return for the obligation he has conferred upon me by restoring me my liberty. I have seen him to-day, he having breakfasted in my apartment.—It is perhaps the last I shall
ever

ever be permitted to bestow. To-morrow I leave him—Ah, Harriot, leave him perhaps for ever!—But adieu till the evening, it will then be time enough for the post.

I have just left him, Harriot, and now return to finish my letter. Good heavens, my dear friend, how strangely am I altered within these few days! I did not use to repine nor be so much dissatisfied with the decrees of Providence. I now blush to find in my heart sentiments so unworthy. I am continually lamenting that no other method was made choice of to repair my father's shattered fortune. I now find no consolation from those reflections that used to afford me so much. I once could please myself with the hope that even the misfortune I so greatly feared, might, by the blessing of heaven, which never fails to accompany those actions performed in obedience
to

to its will prove infinitely less dreadful than I apprehended. I can no longer reason in this just manner: no, my dear, I am no longer the disinterested creature I once flattered myself I was. I am grown selfish; I now am only careful for my own happiness, and forget the felicity of those who ought to be at least as dear to me. Need I tell my friend to what she must impute this unhappy change? Will she not too easily guess the eloquence of the charming Beauchamp is alone to blame? To you, my dear Harriot, I use no reserve: let me then ingenuously confess my weakness. Alas! my unguarded heart has not been proof against his insinuating softness! Unguarded because I ever believed it required no other than its natural insensibility. Ah, how cruelly have I been deceived! Know thyself, is, indeed, my dear friend, a difficult lesson: it is only by a long acquaintance

quaintance one must arrive at this so useful knowledge. But, alas, my information comes too late, since it will only serve to render that duty and obedience I am bound to pay, a thousand times more difficult, hard as it ever appeared, than before I made this fatal discovery. Adieu: to-morrow, Harriot, I must bid a long farewell to the most—but I check my too ready pen. To-morrow, I say, I shall quit my prison—Good heavens! is it possible I should quit it with regret?—and immediately set off for my dear aunt Beville's. Adieu, you shall hear from me the moment I arrive.

Yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

To the SAME.

AH, my dear, my amiable friend, how shall I describe to you my unhappy situation?—Grief, for the irreparable loss of my affectionate and tenderly beloved aunt, of whose death you were no doubt informed, though her poor Emilia was till now unacquainted with that misfortune, has reduced me to a condition truly miserable. I know you at this moment grieve for me: my letter, which informed you of my design, has, I am sensible, given you great uneasiness on your unfortunate friend's account, knowing, as you did, how dreadfully I was going to be shocked and disappointed. It was, indeed, my dear Harriot, more dreadful than you can possibly conceive.

I had

I had pleased myself with the hopes of passing a few days with that amiable friend, before I resigned myself into the hands of those who had never so tenderly studied my felicity as she had ever done — but, ah, think, Harriot, what were my emotions, when enquiring of Mrs. Bethell, her most intimate friend and neighbour, what had occasioned my aunt's house to be shut up, and left without the usual servants to take care of it, imagine, I say, how dreadfully I was shocked, when informed, though in the gentlest manner, of her death! My already too much agitated spirits now entirely forsook me, I fainted, in spite of all her tenderness and care. How long I continued in that happy insensibility I know not, but the first use I made of my restored senses was, to beg she would not suffer the news of my return to be known, till I was in some measure recovered from
the

the affliction this inexpressible loss had occasioned me. I made no difficulty of accepting the offer, she obligingly made me, of her house and protection, till I chose to inform my family where I was, as I could not have found a more agreeable assylum. She is a woman of the most amiable character and friendly disposition: she expressed great pleasure at seeing me, after the strange adventure which had so long detained me from my astonished family, but could give me no particular account of their present situation, being but little acquainted with any of them, except myself. One thing, however, she told me—ah, Harriot, how rejoiced should I be, durst I give credit to the report! she tells me, she is from good authority informed my dear father has got a place at court of considerable income.—Ah, should it be true!—If he has indeed been so fortunate!—but I dare not indulge

dulge the delightful hope, lest your answer to this enquiry, which I shall long for with unspeakable impatience, should fatally convince me I am deceived. Good heavens, my dear Harriot, you know not what emotions this information has raised in my breast: I dare not too closely examine them, but till I hear from you am determined to conceal myself from the knowledge of my father. Ah, do not ask me what those emotions mean — do not, my Harriot, too strictly examine my heart, but write to me instantly, and if possible tell me whether since this increase of fortune my presence is as much as ever desired on the odious Sir Joseph's account. Good heavens, Harriot, I cannot think of that man without horror. Write to me, my friend, O write to me instantly, and confirm the news of my father's prosperity: I ask no other blessing. Let your first letter
contain

contain only that affair. Ah, you know not how much depends on your answer! —A few lines, Harriot—just yes, or no.

Adieu, In an agitation no pen can describe, I am truly

Yours,

EMILIA BEVILLE.



L E T T E R XXVI.

Miss HARRIOT MOLESWORTH, *to*
Miss EMILIA BEVILLE.

THANK heaven, my lovely Emilia, you are again at liberty! I will be silent, since I cannot, with all my study, find words that will in any measure express the excess of my joy. It is utterly impossible, therefore do not expect it: you, I am persuaded, do not feel half so much on the happy occasion;

sion; I am certain you do not: for my part I have scarce behaved like a rational creature since the day I received your last letter from the enchanted castle.

Ah, my dear girl, you bid me not question you, nor look into your heart! Indeed, my sweet friend, it never could dissimble, I see into its inmost recesses, even at this distance. No, my dear, I will not catechise you, nor examine your present emotions, since you forbid me: I shall lose, however, but little information by my obedience, since it does not require much sagacity to learn what you, Emilia, are so exceedingly unwilling to believe. “The odious Sir Joseph?”—You did not use to be so very ill-bred, my friend. Alas, poor man, I think I can see thy love is less likely now than ever to meet with a return!—Pardon me, Emilia, I am more than half out of my wits with joy.
You

You are well, you are at liberty, you are beloved by an angel, that is to say by Harry Beauchamp; you are determined to disappoint his poor dear uncle, and lastly — but no matter, these are enough to produce that effect.

Yet, do not, giddy as I am, think I have forgot your good and justly valued aunt; I knew her worth: she, Emilia, knew yours; could I then fail to love her? But, my dear, her death is no new misfortune, she died in less than a fortnight after you was in so strange a manner forced from us: do me justice, therefore, I beseech you, in regard to her loss, and suffer me to write my thoughts freely as if no such loss had ever befallen us, since I cannot, for my life, be any longer sorrowful. You are out of patience with all this impertinence; you take my joy and gladness for granted, and would just now have spared me this elaborate proof of either:
perhaps

perhaps you might, but till I had thus given it vent, it was not in my power to tell you one syllable about either father or mother, so take that for my answer, and also my apology for sending you more lines than you desired. Strangely altered indeed, Emilia! you did not use to petition so emphatically for short letters, my friend. Ah, Emilia, Emilia!

Well then, shall I now answer your so interesting question, or begin with a minute detail of all that has happened since you left us? Heaven forbid, you cry; do not, my dear Harriot, distract me with your teizing impertinence. Civil, to say truth.

Know then, that your good, reverend, and prudent father has, as dame Bethell rightly informed you, absolutely got the place: better men are not yet served, but that's a trifle. And so Emilia, as I was saying,

he has got the place, which I am told is worth at least eight hundred a year. The duce is in it if the odious man—your own soft words my dear—would have given him a better price for you than this, dear as you are to his weather-beaten heart: but the worst of the affair is, the said eight hundred a year has not cured the old soul of his passion, nor is your father's promise yet revoked. The knight still hopes, and they still vow, you shall, if alive and worthy that felicity, be his in spite of fate.—I presume they mean in case you can be found.

This, my dear, is the present posture of affairs in Hanover-square, nor has any thing else extraordinary happened since you left it. It may not, however, be amiss to tell you, Sir Joseph had no hand in procuring the place, so no additional obligation on that account.

I have

I have not the least guess, you see, what are your present sentiments—O no, by no means—but, nevertheless, I may talk to you as if I had, there's no harm in that you know. Well then, Emilia, what is it you intend? How comes the happiness of your life to depend on this answer? Do not be afraid to open your heart to your Harriot, she is perfectly well disposed to approve any design you may form, and half guesses the odious man is to feel the effects of his eight hundred a year. Let me know every thought and intention of it, do not conceal one of them, and depend on my approbation. As for your sister's affairs, let them rest till we have settled those of more importance. Write immediately, and depend on the secrecy, or any other service in the power of

Your,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.

P. S. You see I do not begin to mention the astonishment I was in when informed to whom it is you have so long been indebted for bed, board, and lodging; a quire would not contain half I intended to say on that subject:—I will only just observe to you what were my first reflections when let into this impenetrable secret. How! cried I, was it possible for us, my good mamma, not to suspect that very family, since we were obliged to suspect somebody? Who so likely as that ambitious woman to do a thing of that kind, when it so nearly concerned her interest to prevent her brother's playing the fool?—Pardon me, Emilia, no disrespect to you. Very true, said mamma, I am really surpris'd it never occurred to us during our tedious perplexity.—It is mighty easy to guess a thing when one knows it.

Heavens!

Heavens! what a dust will be raised when there arrives a certain person! What an *eclaircissement*! Fine eyes, you say?—Blue, I hope, and the kind of languish I admire.—Exactly.—Adieu, keep them in remembrance.—Write.



LETTER XXVII.

MISS BEVILLE, to MISS MOLES-
WORTH.

WHAT can I write to you, Harriot?—I can resolve on nothing. Yet I think one thing is nevertheless determined, which is, not to yeild myself voluntarily to certain misery, since the only motive that made me ever consent to such a sacrifice no longer subsists. Providence has graciously interposed to save me from that dreadful

fate: my father's fortune is restored without that fatal resource. With what unfeigned gratitude have I returned thanks to heaven for the unexpected blessing! Ah may they never know a moment's pain, whatever is reserved for their unfortunate Emilia!

Will you, my dear Harriot, approve of any resolution I may form? Will you indeed acquit me of ingratitude, or want of duty to my father, if I do not enable him to keep his promise to that odious man? Yes, my dear, odious let me call him, in spite of your lively remarks. How I am to be disposed of till his fatal promise is revoked, or Sir Joseph cured of his imagined passion, heaven knows. I have as yet fixed on no plan, but cannot think of returning to my family, circumstanced as I unhappily am. Ah, Harriot, it is impossible. I will not conceal from you the inmost secrets of my heart, I have
never

never been accustomed to practise deceit, and should blush did I find the sentiments I entertain for my amiable deliverer made that fault become necessary. No, my friend, let me confess without reserve, that it was impossible to hear or see him with indifference.—Indifference, did I say?—Ah, Harriot! Yet believe me, let this proof of my sincerity induce you to it; believe me, I say, had I never seen him, my aversion, my dread of his horrid uncle would, I am persuaded, have prevented my return, since my father's interest is no longer concerned. This is most certain, nor can I think myself to blame; on the contrary, I am of opinion, that to enter into those solemn vows with a man I not only greatly disapprove, but particularly dislike, is infinitely more displeasing in the sight of heaven, in whose presence those vows are made, than to disoblige my father by refusing

to obey him.—What is it in fact but perjury? for, tell me, Harriot, could I either love or honour such a man? Obey him, indeed, I might have obliged myself to do, but surely the other parts of my engagement must have been out of my power. Why then promise what I am sensible I never could perform? No, my dear friend, after the most serious reflection, my heart acquits me: by disappointing his ridiculous hopes, I certainly commit no crime.

I have acquainted Mrs. Bethell with the whole affair, she pities me, and assures me of her friendship and protection as long as it is either agreeable to me or necessary for my affairs. I am now tormented with a thousand fears, lest my father should send for me to this place: for though my dear aunt is no more, he will naturally enquire for me in her neighbourhood, when

when informed of my design of going to her. It cannot be long before Mr. Beauchamp arrives in London. Ah, Harriot, I dread to think what may be the consequence of this frightful affair! What will my father say when informed by whose means I have so long been confined? Sir Joseph too—will they not more effectually destroy their hopes and expectations by this adventure, than if they had suffered him to be as ridiculous as he pleased? He will certainly never forgive them, and will, no doubt, find some other way to disappoint their mercenary views. Yet the uncommon merit of his nephew—he cannot refuse him a place in his friendship. Impossible! his first appearance must ensure him his esteem: his manner so gentle, so sweetly engaging!—Ah, how perfectly am I acquainted with his amiable character—though not in his company above a day or

two!—I make this remark, Harriot, to spare you the trouble.—Yet what, my friend, did he not say, during those very few days indeed? Ah, one need but see to admire, but I, Harriot, both saw and heard.

Adieu: be now as minute as you please, I am impatient to be informed of every thing that has happened, either before or since my deliverance. Do not forget to mention Caroline, though my presaging heart tells me I shall hear nothing concerning her that will greatly add to the joy I feel in being again permitted to write with freedom to my Harriot. Adieu,

Your affectionate,

EMILIA BEVILLE.

L. E. T.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

Miss HARRIOT MOLESWORTH, to
Miss EMILIA BEVILLE.

THANK you, in the first place, my dear girl, for opening your heart to me as I desired. You have, indeed, told me nothing of which I had not before a pretty shrewd guess, but your merit in obeying is still the same; you could not help my penetration, I have ever been famous for it. Why child, were I, as you bid me, to be particular in relating not all that has happened since you first set out on your adventures, but merely since your return from captivity, I should never have done, and consequently you would have but a small chance of knowing any thing of the matter. Your swain arrived in town last week: an epistle from Mrs. Stanhope gave me the history of what

L 6 followed.

followed. Would you believe it possible that his mother was the contriver of the whole plot? You know her mercenary disposition, so does the whole town. Mr. Beauchamp has been at no small pains to acquit himself of the suspicion this naturally cast upon him, nor does any one now doubt his veracity: his rage and the diligent enquiries he is making to be informed of the truth, leaves no room to suspect him. Why all this trouble, you ask, since his dear spouse, if not himself, must have done it? True, my dear, no one doubts this, how indeed should they, for who could have made use of their house and servants, without either his consent or hers? But madam denies the whole affair—true as you are alive, positively denies knowing any thing of the matter. Her servants, she says, must have been bribed: it is well known they had not made use of that seat for

two or three summers: what interest or concern could she possibly have in Miss Beville's affairs? Was it not a thousand times more probable that a lover had taken that method to prevent her marrying Sir Joseph? Who more likely than Lord B—, who publicly made so much bustle about her? How could any one of common sense suspect her of a thing so extremely ridiculous? For, adds she, supposing interest to have been my inducement, could I have taken a more effectual way to disoblige Sir Joseph? Could I ever hope he would forgive being so cruelly disappointed?

This, Emilia, is the innocent creature's reasoning, but, however sagacious, not a soul believes one word of all she says on the subject. Sir Joseph swears he will rather sink his fortune in the sea, than suffer either her or any of her offspring to touch a penny of it. Your family cried aloud for satisfaction, but
no

no one can determine what kind they can procure. Was it not absolutely certain that Mr. Beauchamp is entirely ignorant of the whole affair, your father and he (you having no brother, or else they might have set the two youngsters to settle the point) would undoubtedly have amused the town with a duel; but his behaviour on the occasion has been so extremely generous and open, that it is impossible for the most prejudiced to blame him. By the way, it would be rather a hard case, were every man obliged to fight whose wife's conduct is not quite faultless.

They are in some wonderment you do not return, since you can now have no inducement to stay where you are. Caroline fancies you are with us, and begs I will inform her not only of that, but every thing else that concerns you: but trust me for that, or any other confidence you please to honour me with.

Your

Your presages on her ladyship's account are pretty just. The dear creatures are now converted into the most fashionable pair you ever saw. She writes to me now and then, as I desired her, before I left town, in case she should hear any thing of her sister Emilia. Would you believe it?—or rather would you doubt it?—Her dear Charles has procured her a little assistance, in case she should find it too fatiguing to spend his whole fortune by her own labour and care. Yes, my dear, she tells me he now keeps a mistress to share with her that trouble.—How kind and considerate for so young a man!—And she talks of it accordingly, but thinks she could have managed it, great as it is, without this proof of his affection. Uncles and fathers still continue inflexible: this is perhaps one cause of their mutual discontent, for love alone is but a poor subsistence;

subsistence; though in the days of our ancestors I have been told they required little more. It is true, they were not so well acquainted with the various ways of squandering money as we are: quadrille, and a thousand other pretty amusements were quite unknown to them. She has no suspicion of young Beauchamp's passion for a friend of mine. I suppose he thought this no very favourable time to mention it. How nobly might the old knight behave on this occasion, if he had any idea of generosity! Instead of the revenge he so violently threatens, why does he not gain immortal fame and honour by yielding some part of his fortune to his no doubt despairing nephew, and next remove that despair by presenting him with your hand? An act like this might chance to gain him even my favour and friendship. I vow I could, on that condition, half
consent

consent to take the old Grecian for my own spouse, nay positively would, rather than the dear creature should pine for want of a wife.

But adieu Emilia. For heaven's sake write to me immediately, and tell me what you intend. That you may look upon our house as your own, is a truth you are sensible of, so reflect upon it. I must again remind you that Sir Joseph is most furiously constant, and your father's promise in *statu quo*. I dare not flatter you, nor will I lengthen this letter, as I long more than you can conceive to know what this information will produce. Remember mamma loves you, at least as well as she does

Your,

HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.

LET-

L E T T E R XXIX.

Miss EMILIA BEVILLE, *to Miss*
HARRIOT MOLESWORTH.

DO not be surpris'd, my dear Harriot, nor blame me for this change in my sentiments. I have done nothing since I wrote to you last, but reflected on what my duty required from me, in this my dreadfully perplexing situation, and this, my dear friend, is the result of those reflections.

I am, at this very moment, preparing to rejoin my family. Yes, Harriot, I will resign myself into their protection: I will, on my knees, implore my father's pity. He is not naturally cruel or unkind, he will consider the sacrifice I voluntarily offered to make when his affairs required it. He knew my sincerity and will reward it by recalling
ing

ing the fatal promise he then gave. This, I trust, will be the consequence of my present design. I am persuaded I cannot, with that prudence by which I ever wish to be governed, follow any other. My duty to those who have an indisputable right to my obedience in every reasonable point, demands this confidence: the violation of that duty must, I am fully persuaded, be ever followed by remorse. Let me not then do any thing to which I must look back with regret. That I never will marry Sir Joseph is most certain. Yes, my dear Harriot, believe me, I would prefer death to that misfortune, but I will not avoid it by any unjustifiable means. I will indeed refuse, because I am persuaded the authority of a parent does not extend so far as to force our inclinations in a point of such importance; but I will refuse with respect, they shall have no cause to blame me
for

for not paying them all they are intitled to, and be assured I never was inclined to think that a little: far, very far from it. In every thing but this, it ever was and shall be a pleasure to obey, but in this case I am, I say, persuaded, a respectful refusal may be given without breach of duty. This, Harriot, is my fixed determination. You promised to approve my design, whatever it might be: I flatter myself you will not now change your obliging purpose, but encourage me to persevere in the resolution I have formed, which is no easy one. I am but too sensible I have infinitely more to fear than hope, yet they cannot force me to give my hand, they will not treat a child with so much unmerited severity. Circumstances are changed since the horrid offer was made, the inducement for accepting it no longer subsists; why then should I despair? My tears shall prevail, my unremitted

remitted study to oblige in every instance but this, shall soften their resentment for my refusal.

Ah, my dear Harriot, what is it you tell me of my poor Caroline? How sincerely do I pity her unfortunate destiny! Infinitely more perhaps than she pities herself. Happy insensibility! at least in this one instance, though not in every other. Are not parents rather to blame, Harriot, and in some measure accessory to their childrens ruin, when they thus reject their submissions? My father, indeed, at that time was embarrassed by a thousand unfortunate affairs; but surely Mr. Stanhope, rich as he is, no family to provide for, might have prevented, by his favour and protection, evils infinitely more dreadful than that he so warmly resents. I am far from attempting to justify Caroline's conduct, but, surely, I may be permitted to say it is almost their duty to prevent a
misfortune,

misfortune, when so evidently in their power; for I am persuaded their forgiveness would have had a proper effect on the heart of my sister, gay and unthinking as she is. Do you think, my dear Harriot, they will prevent my seeing her? I shall be extremely concerned should they deny me this satisfaction: in a few days I shall have an opportunity to ask that favour. Ah, Harriot, shall I not also be again persecuted? But let me not look forward, or I shall not have courage to support the dreaded interview.

I forgot to tell you, that my dear aunt has left me a testimony of her affection in her will, which, Mrs. Bethell tells me, is ready to be paid me on demand: much it cannot be, but however trifling, coming from that amiable friend, it will be received with gratitude.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Harriot, my next will be from London. Heaven knows what news it will contain! I have a thousand tormenting fears and apprehensions.

EMILIA BEVILLE.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.



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